# A Pulpit Commentary

ON

# Catholic Teaching

A COMPLETE EXPOSITION OF
CATHOLIC DOCTRINE, DISCIPLINE AND CULT

IN

ORIGINAL DISCOURSES

BY

PULPIT PREACHERS OF OUR OWN DAY

ALMA COLLEGE
252
LIBRARY
N917
Alma, California

VOL. III

THE MEANS OF GRACE

NEW YORK
JOSEPH F. WAGNER

3353

Nihil Obstat

REMIGIUS LAFORT, S.T.L.

*Censor*

Imprimatur

✠JOHN M. FARLEY, D.D.

*Archbishop of New York*

NEW YORK, SEPTEMBER 25, 1909

Copyright, 1909, by JOSEPH F. WAGNER, New York

# CONTENTS


| | | PAGE |
|---|---|---|
| I. | GRACE; ACTUAL GRACE. By the Rev. John H. Stapleton | 1 |
| II. | SANCTIFYING GRACE. By the Rev. John H. Stapleton | 9 |
| III. | CO-OPERATION WITH GRACE; PERSEVERANCE IN GRACE. By the Rev. Ferreol Girardey, C.SS.R. | 17 |
| IV. | THE SEVEN SACRAMENTS. By the Right Rev. John S. Vaughan, D. D. | 25 |
| V. | THE SACRAMENT OF BAPTISM. By the Rev. F. M. Harvey | 32 |
| VI. | THE SACRAMENT OF CONFIRMATION; THE GIFTS AND FRUITS OF THE HOLY GHOST. By the Rev. H. G. Hughes | 41 |
| VII. | HUMAN DIGNITY FROM THE HOLY GHOST. By the Right Rev. James Bellord, D.D. | 49 |
| VIII. | THE BLESSED EUCHARIST. By the Rev. C. P. Bruehl, D.D. | 57 |
| IX. | THE REAL PRESENCE. By the Right Rev. James Bellord, D.D. | 65 |
| X. | THE HOLY MASS—A MEANS OF GRACE. By the Rev. G. Lee, C.S.SP. | 74 |
| XI. | HOLY COMMUNION. By the Right Rev. Alex. MacDonald, D.D. | 81 |
| XII. | THE SACRAMENT OF PENANCE. By the Rev. H. G. Hughes | 89 |
| XIII. | EXAMINATION OF CONSCIENCE. By the Rev. H. G. Hughes.....) | 98 |
| XIV. | CONTRITION. By the Rev. H. G. Hughes | 106 |
| XV. | RESOLUTION OF AMENDMENT. By the Rev. H. G. Hughes | 113 |
| XVI. | PENANCE. By the Right Rev. John S. Vaughan, D.D | 119 |
| XVII. | ON CONFESSION. By the Rev. C. P. Bruehl, D.D. | 126 |
| XVIII. | INDULGENCES. By the Rev. G. Lee, C.S.SP | 134 |
| XIX. | EXTREME UNCTION, AND, THE SPIRITUAL CARE OF THE SICK. By the Rev. Ferreol Girardey, C.SS.R. | 141 |
| XX. | HOLY ORDERS. By the Very Rev. James J. Fox, D.D. | 150 |
| XXI. | THE RELIGIOUS LIFE. By the Right Rev. James Bellord, D.D. | 158 |
| XXII. | THE SACRAMENT OF MARRIAGE: I. ITS INSTITUTION AND PURPOSE. By the Rev. Thomas J. Gerrard | 165 |
| XXIII. | THE SACRAMENT OF MARRIAGE: II. ITS SANCTITY. By the Rev. Thomas J. Gerrard | 172 |
| XXIV. | THE SACRAMENT OF MARRIAGE: III. ESPOUSALS. By the Rev. Thomas J. Gerrard | 180 |
| XXV. | THE SACRAMENT OF MARRIAGE: IV. MIXED MARRIAGES. By the Rev. Thomas J. Gerrard | 188 |

# CONTENTS


PAGE

XXVI. THE SACRAMENT OF MARRIAGE: V. HUSBAND AND WIFE.
By the Rev. Thomas J. Gerrard..... 195

XXVII. THE SACRAMENT OF MARRIAGE: VI. THE CATHOLIC FAMILY.
By the Rev. Thomas J. Gerrard..... 202

XXVIII. THE SACRAMENT OF MARRIAGE: VII. THE BLESSING OF MANY CHILDREN.
By the Rev. Thomas J. Gerrard..... 209

XXIX. THE SACRAMENT OF MARRIAGE: VIII. CATHOLIC EDUCATION.
By the Rev. Thomas J. Gerrard..... 217

XXX. THE STATE OF WEALTH.
By the Right Rev. James Bellord, D.D..... 226

XXXI. THE STATE OF POVERTY.
By the Right Rev. James Bellord, D.D..... 236

XXXII. THE SACRAMENTALS.
By the Right Rev. Alex. MacDonald, D.D..... 245

XXXIII. THE BLESSINGS OF PERSONS.
By the Rev. J. W. Sullivan..... 253

XXXIV. THE CROSS: THE SIGN OF THE CROSS; THE CRUCIFIX.
By the Very Rev. James J. Fox, D.D..... 261

XXXV. PRAYER: ITS NECESSITY.
By the Right Rev. John S. Vaughan, D.D..... 270

XXXVI. PRAYER: ITS EFFICACY.
By the Right Rev. John S. Vaughan, D.D..... 276

XXXVII. THE LORD'S PRAYER. I.
By the Rev. William Graham..... 283

XXXVIII. THE LORD'S PRAYER. II.
By the Rev. William Graham..... 292

XXXIX. THE LORD'S PRAYER. III.
By the Rev. William Graham..... 301

XL. THE LORD'S PRAYER. IV.
By the Rev. William Graham..... 310

XLI. THE HAIL MARY. I.
By the Rev. C. P. Bruehl, D.D..... 319

XLII. THE HAIL MARY. II.
By the Rev. C. P. Bruehl, D.D..... 327

XLIII. THE ROSARY AND THE ANGELUS.
By the Rev. Francis M. Harvey..... 335

XLIV. THE LITANIES AND THE SALVE REGINA,
By the Right Rev. Alex. MacDonald, D.D..... 343

XLV. MORNING AND EVENING PRAYERS.
By the Rev. H. G. Hughes..... 350

XLVI. THE WAY OF THE CROSS.
By the Right Rev. Alex. MacDonald, D.D..... 358

XLVII. PROCESSIONS AND PILGRIMAGES.
By the Rev. John W. Sullivan..... 365

XLVIII. FASTING, ALMS, WORKS OF CHARITY.
By the Right Rev. Alex. MacDonald, D.D..... 372

XLIX. THE INNER LIFE.
By the Right Rev. James Bellord, D.D..... 380

L. THE SUPERNATURAL LIFE.
By the Right Rev. James Bellord, D.D..... 390

LI. DYING TO THE WORLD AND LIVING TO CHRIST.
By the Right Rev. James Bellord, D.D..... 398

# THE CATHOLIC TEACHING, IN DOCTRINE, DISCIPLINE AND CULT

## Vol. III. The Means of Grace

---

## I. GRACE; ACTUAL GRACE

BY THE REV. JOHN H. STAPLETON

"But to every one of us is given grace, according to the measure of the giving of Christ."—Ephes. iv, 7.

*SYNOPSIS.—Knowledge and use of grace; like many things in nature, its mysteriousness does not interfere with its practical usefulness.*

*I. Grace a gift, spiritual, supernatural, mysterious, to be perceived only by faith.*

*II. Actual as distinguished from habitual grace. The threefold "measure of the giving of Christ" is:*

*III. First, according to man's nature and sins; Zacheus the Short; the Scriptures; the burden of the law; necessary grace.*

*IV. Second, according to the will of God, that all men shall be saved. Efficacious grace.*

*V. Third, according to the will of man to receive it; consequence of its refusal. Sufficient grace.*

*Conclusion.*

"I had rather feel compunction," says the author of the "Imitation," "than know its definition." So might we say of grace—which is measured out to every one of us—that the proper use of it is of vastly more profit than the ability to define it correctly or a profound knowledge of its mysteries. We know little of grace. No human mind has ever fathomed the depths of this mystery. Yet, than this term, grace, there is perhaps none more familiar on the lips of Christians. Accustomed to employ it on innumerable occasions, we understand in a general way what is meant by it. Our perception may not be of the clearest, nor our information the most minute and complete, nor our method of comprehension the most scientific, so to speak. But our knowledge of it, such as it is, is sufficient for all practical purposes.

It is so with many things of this world. Ask men what electricity is, ask the learned, ask the expert. Or the best qualified physician who deals so knowingly and so successfully with human life, inquire of him if he knows what human life is. They speak long and write voluminously on these matters. Each observes the manifestations of the mysterious energy before him, studies its properties and mode of action, and applies, for the great benefit of

mankind, the learning and information thus acquired. But it ever remains a *mysterious* energy, and of its precise nature they know not a word; of what it really is, they are still profoundly ignorant. Our experience is the same concerning this mysterious force which we call grace; it *is* a mystery. But, if in a field strikingly analogous, the man of science or the man of medicine knows no more, and if his is a working knowledge, sufficient for all the purposes of his art: so should our imperfect discernment of the supernatural virtue of grace be considered sufficient for the transcendent needs of our immortal souls.

1. What, then, as far as we can know, is grace? Is it something we can see and touch and taste? Is it something one can take in hand, subject to chemical analysis, decompose into its several elements and thus come to determine accurately its precise nature and properties? It belongs not to this world of things. Holy Scripture tells us, and the Little Catechism reminds us, simply that it is a gift, a divine gift. This gift is divine in a fourfold aspect. First, because it is *from* God, who is the donor and its source. Then, it is a gift *of* God, for it is a participation, in some manner, of the life and nature of God, a communication of a divine energy; a virtue not belonging to the human nature with which we are endowed, not essentially required by it as such, infinitely beyond and above any force that can be conceived within or without man in the order of pure nature. Thirdly, this bounty of grace is *for* God, its purpose being, for God's glory, to make possible in us a certain shaping and form of life and action in this world, which alone can insure salvation and eternal happiness for us in the next; to assist us in doing and living according to the will of God, after a manner pleasing to Him and worthy of a reward. Finally, *through* God in Christ is it procured for us and bestowed upon us, since to it we have no rightful claim or title, do not and can not deserve it, are insufficient to procure it for ourselves: Christ alone obtained it for us; He, suffering and dying merited for us; and His merits purchased for us this gift, the means of our salvation.

This explains why grace is called a spiritual, not a material, gift, since it is not made up of things of earth, as are other gifts which we receive; but pertains to God, the giver, who is a Spirit; to the soul, the recipient, which is a spirit; and can not be seen by bodily eyes. So, too, is it called supernatural, because it belongs to an order of things superior to that nature according to which we have

been created. It is inevitable, therefore, that it should be a mysterious gift which our natural powers are incapable of fully comprehending, for it does not fall within the range of our natural senses and faculties. If perceived at all, it must be perceived by that higher sense which we possess, that is, faith. And let us not forget that faith is just as surely a faculty for perceiving and knowing, as are the senses of seeing and hearing and tasting.

2. It is clearly within the power of us all to conceive two sorts of gifts. Some are like the alms which we drop into the outstretched hand of the poor beggar; our pity and compassion moves us to help him in his misery, to relieve his immediate wants, to enable him to procure the food or shelter necessary to prevent his dying of cold or hunger. Other gifts are like the steady, constant flow of an assured income, whereon the fortunate heir draws inexhaustibly and is thus enabled to live a life of comfort and luxury. The former is a passing, the latter a lasting gift. The one is offered for the need of the moment and ceases as soon as the need is past; the other abides as long as the worthiness of the recipient.

And so we speak of two kinds of divine grace. The one is a transitory succor or support, the other a permanent state or condition of being established to persevere. The former is a stimulus that quickens and facilitates action, makes it possible to think, to will, to do, according to God; the latter creates a state of ready fitness and vigor, of lasting comfort and pleasure. The one is like a flash of light which illumines the murky darkness—a jolt to the selfish, sluggish, faltering will—a sudden and mighty uplift to achieve what is begun and to complete it. The other is like the constant glow of the noon-day orb, the continuous pressure of a potent force, the exuberance of superadded strength and health and life.

No one but sees at once how fittingly this gift or assistance for a momentary want is called actual grace, since it is a virtue communicated to the soul to enable it to produce an act, either of the mind, by thought—or of the will, by desire—or of the body, by deed. Once the act performed, the assistance ceases, the gift expires—there being no further necessity for it. Actual grace is therefore an immediate aid lent to us on an occasion of need. It may be a light to our intellect, making it possible for us to think or understand; or a strength to our will whereby the hard course of duty is chosen and the "primrose path of dalliance" avoided, despite the difficulties on the one hand or on the other the allurements, which

are foreseen. It may be a warmth to our affections creating anew the fires of affection or zeal or enthusiasm. Now, it is a warning in danger, a suggestion in folly, a solace in discouragement. Again, a person or presence, a bit of news, a circumstance of time or place, a happening or accident, a misfortune according to men. It may be the most natural thing in the world apparently, and yet be due to the power that "worketh in us both to will and to accomplish."

3. We are told in the text that "to every one of us is given grace, according to the measure of the giving of Christ." Now, what is this "measure of the giving of Christ!" The first measure of that giving is certainly the intrinsic necessity of grace itself; God gives it to us according to the need we have of it. It is plain that without grace some deeds naturally and morally good may be performed, some truths of faith known, some precepts of the natural law observed, for our human nature is not wholly corrupt and vitiated by original sin. But it is equally certain that nothing so accomplished is according to the end for which man was created. Man's end is not that of the beast of the field—to pass, after a life of the senses, into nothingness—a mere natural end. He was created to see and enjoy God in an afterlife of infinite bliss, but here and now to know and serve Him as He wishes to be known and served, that is, in a manner in keeping with his end, and worthy of it. That end, which is God, is therefore supernatural; and no means but those which are supernatural can be expected to lead to that end. Natural forces alone can not do this. Water can not rise above its level; neither can nature rise above itself.

Here is a stone. It exists, but has not feeling. And feeling it can not give itself, or have, unless the almighty power which created it interfere to operate a miraculous change. So is it supernatural, so to speak, for a mountain or tree to move about and walk. A fish can not run or fly about in the air above, nor can the beast reason and talk, for such manners of being and of doing are not according to the nature which God gave them, but belong to natures superior to theirs, and are therefore supernatural to them. And so, because left to himself man disposes only of natural means, he can not without grace attain to the higher life to which he is called, or even strive after it by a becoming service, or even aim at so lofty a goal. No supernatural work of any kind can be accomplished by the unaided forces of nature; nothing "according to God" can be performed except with the assistance of grace.

On His way from Galilee to Jerusalem the Saviour came to the village of Jericho, and entering therein He walked through its streets, accompanied by the multitude who surrounded Him and pressed in His footsteps. Lost in the numerous throng was one Zacheus, a man chief among the publicans and, by reason of his extortions, possessed of much wealth. And the Gospel remarks that Zacheus was "low of stature"; and that "he sought to see Jesus who he was, but he could not for the crowd." Not, however, to be deprived of the blessed privilege he coveted of beholding the divine Countenance, he ran ahead and climbed into a sycamore tree "that he might see him, for he was to pass that way." And he saw. Nay, more, he was seen. And that day salvation came to the house of Zacheus.

It is not without significance for us that Zacheus is described as being a sinner and "low of stature"; and able to see Christ only after climbing into a sycamore tree; and by this means overcoming his natural disability and being raised aloft, above his natural condition. By nature and by sin, we, too, are in a state of lowliness and debasement in the presence of the infinite God. His abode is inaccessible to flesh and blood, weak and tainted with sin. In our lives He passes, He is continually passing. If we succeed in seeing or hearing Him, if we believe in Him and keep His precepts, if we do anything according to the plan of His holy will, anything pertaining to heaven and its reward, it is only after we are lifted up from earth, as was Zacheus, raised above our natural conditions of sinfulness and assisted by that power which "worketh in us both to will and to accomplish."

We can well afford to take the word of God himself for this: "No man can come to me, except the Father, who hath sent me, draw him." The name of God on our lips is not according to God, if it be not grace that moves us to utter it: "and no man can say the Lord Jesus but by the Holy Ghost." Not even a good thought is possible, for St. Paul affirms that we are "not sufficient to think anything of ourselves, as of ourselves, but our sufficiency is from God." In a word: "It is God who worketh in you, both to will and to accomplish."

"And the Lord said: Simon, Simon, behold Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat: but I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not." Observe how Peter himself, the prince of the Apostles, the rock upon which Christ built His Church,

even Peter would not have persevered in fidelity to his Master, and avoided to the end the snares of the wily one, had not grace been secured unto him by the prayer of Christ. If without that help Peter would have fallen and been lost, what hope can we have of pursuing constantly the right course unassisted by a like virtue from above?

God has imposed upon us the yoke of His service and the burden of His law. That yoke is sweet, we are told, and that burden light, but only on condition of our availing ourselves of the divine assistance to bear it. Otherwise, the yoke is galling and the burden impossible. He who struggles alone and unaided, who relies on his own native strength, who invokes not and obtains not this prop which nature requires essentially, is doomed to failure and disaster—the inevitable outcome of an impossible task. It is labor lost to strive to climb the clouds, in the superior region of God, on a ladder of one's own invention and make; the ladder, like that of Jacob, must be let down from above—God's hand stretched forth to uplift. In the atmosphere of the supernatural no airship—the fruit of human ingenuity—can be made to soar high or steer a straight course, or long persevere without the calamity of failure which attends all human efforts, due to the inherent faults and weaknesses of all things human. And those who have failed, and who fail, in the matter of God's service, are those who would trust too much in their own powers and reckon without the power which said: "Without me you can do nothing."

4. If without Him we can do nothing, what is more reasonable to expect than that with Him we should be able to do all things necessary! And this, according to the teaching of the Church, is precisely the case, once more "according to the measure of the giving of Christ." St. Luke speaks of this measure when he tells us that it is "good measure, and pressed down, and shaken together, and running over"—full and complete, then, in every sense. It is the will of God that all men shall be saved. Since grace is essential to all that pertains to salvation—its beginning, its progress, and its achievement—then the measure of Christ's giving it is boundless, inexhaustible, offered to all, denied to none. It may be that all of us are not born to rise to an equal level of holiness, but not one but has at his disposal enough of the divine assistance to overcome every temptation, practise every virtue, accomplish every good however difficult, perform his whole duty and thus arrive securely at the goal

of eternal happiness. This is why St. Paul could say with utter confidence: "I can do all things in him that strengtheneth me."

5. What, then, is the secret of the failure of some men to serve God and save their souls? How is it that grace, which the law of our fallen nature requires and which it is the will of God that all men should possess in sufficient fulness, is wanting in many—and thereby God, who is the Light, is not seen by faith; and "his commandments," which St. John tells us, "are not heavy," become unbearable; and the light yoke is made overwhelming, and the sweet burden bitter beyond endurance? "O ye inhabitants of Jerusalem, and ye men of Judea, judge between me and my vineyard. What is there that I ought to do more to my vineyard that I have not done to it?" If Zacheus, his view obstructed by the encompassing throng, had stood at the foot of the sycamore tree and refused to make the effort necessary to climb therein, and had thus missed the sight of the passing Saviour: to what would have to be ascribed his failure to see and the failure of salvation to come to his house?

God's grace is that "peace on earth to men of good will." This, too, is the "measure of the giving of Christ," that it depends on our good will to accept it, to do all that in us lies to be worthy of it. The wicked perish, says St. Augustine, not because they could not be good but because they *would* not. It is possible, by a perverse will, to nullify the will of the Almighty in our regard, which is, that the grace offered us shall produce within us results of virtue and salvation. It is possible by unworthy dispositions, by malice, by selfishness, by cowardice, to prevent God from working "in us both to will and to accomplish." This is only too true; this truth is only too apparent. The wicked servant in the Gospel well knew the will of his master, but refused to act according to it. The slothful servant received his talent with the rest; but he did not make it fructify, he hid it in the earth. "You stiff-necked and uncircumcised of heart and ears," cried out St. Stephen, "you always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers did, so do you also." "Judge between me and my vineyard," said the Lord—He had done to it all that He ought to have done; He looked that it should bring forth grapes, and it brought forth wild grapes. And listen to the pathetic complaint of the rejected Christ: "Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killeth the prophets, and stonest them that are sent to thee, how often would I have gathered together thy children, as the hen doth gather her chickens under her wing, but thou *wouldst* not."

Actual grace is a passing of the Lord in our lives. If through our fault we miss Him, He is gone; and the grace lost will never return. Zacheus understood what it was worth to look upon the countenance of the Lord. If, unlike him, we do nothing, He will pass unawares, as He did when the mob rose up and thrust Him out of their city of Nazareth and brought Him to the brow of the hill whereon their city was built, that they might cast Him down headlong: "But he, passing through the midst of them, went his way." Actual grace is a visitation. If we receive Him not into the house of our souls, as did the publican, to our house salvation will not come.

"And the last state of that man is made worse than the first. So shall it be also to this wicked generation" who, having the divine assistance offered to them, correspond not therewith. Grace rejected is grace withdrawn. The soul is then left to its native powers. Then the mind is darkened in default of light from above; the will is weakened because there is no supernatural strength forthcoming; the heart is hardened, as was Pharao's, as a consequence of God's love abused. Asking not, they do not receive; seeking not, they do not find; failing to knock, it is not opened unto them. Before them is "life and death, good and evil: that which they shall choose shall be given them": if evil and death, then evil and death. If "the days come upon thee and thy enemies cast a trench about thee, and compass thee around and straiten thee on every side and beat thee flat to the ground"—as befell perverse Jerusalem—it will be "because thou hast not known the time of thy visitation." "Because I called and you refused: (because) I stretched out my hand, and there was none that regarded: (because) you have despised my counsels and have neglected my reprehensions—I also will laugh in your destruction and will mock when that shall come to you which you feared . . . Then shall you call upon me and I will not hear: they shall rise in the morning and shall not find me. Therefore they shall eat the fruit of their own ways, and shall be filled with their own devices."

Let us then know this much of the mysterious gift of grace: that without it we can not attempt to do the will of God on earth or attain to His blessed reward in the next; that it is offered to us all in the plentitude of the divine goodness; that we may use or abuse it according to the free will with which God has endowed us. Let us then look "diligently, lest any man be wanting to the grace of God."

## II. SANCTIFYING GRACE

BY THE REV. JOHN H. STAPLETON

"And I live, now not I; but Christ liveth in me."—Gal. ii, 20.

*SYNOPSIS.—Actual and sanctifying grace contrasted by the story of Zacheus, who was lifted up and thus saw Christ; and then received Him in his house to enjoy His presence and friendship. Sanctifying grace is:*

*I. A life communicated to the soul, whereby the Holy Spirit lives within us as in a temple; whereby that life is restored which was first breathed into man by the Maker and afterward lost by the death of sin; whereby we become children of God.*

*II. Friendship with God by justification and sanctification; sin is removed, God's image revealed; paternal affection.*

*III. The seed of glory yielding supernatural fruit. Peter's night-long task. Only by this heavenly virtue can heaven be striven for directly.*

*Conclusion.—Grace and glory; possessing God here and hereafter.*

Zacheus had climbed into the sycamore tree on the passage of the Saviour through the hamlet of Jericho. This he did because, being "low of stature"—a sinner—he could not otherwise have beheld the divine countenance of Him who was passing. "And when Jesus was come to the place, looking up, he saw him, and said: Zacheus, make haste and come down; for this day I must abide in thy house; and he made haste and came down; and he received him with joy. . . . Jesus said to him: This day is salvation come to thy house." Remark the transformation wrought in this Zacheus, the type of the natural, sinful man, in the presence of God: how from a stranger he becomes the host of the Lord; from being unable to see Him, he is blessed with the unspeakable favor of possessing Him as a guest; from being detested of men by reason of his official position and of his extortions, he becomes the intimate and friend of Christ; a sinner loaded with iniquity, he receives the assurance of salvation. He enters into the joy of the Lord, he begins a life of union with Him.

Remark again how this abiding of Christ in the house of the chief of the publicans was not an assistance or aid, lent merely for an occasion of need—like the grace, called actual, which was limited to prompting and enabling him to view the countenance of the Son

of God; but something permanent and lasting which united him with the divine Friend, whereby he shared with Him, so to speak, a common life; a state of intimacy and affectionate companionship. It was a made-over existence, to which salvation was promised and assured, in which the germ of immortality was planted. This is sanctifying or habitual grace: not a gift that comes and goes according to the necessity of the moment, but an abiding virtue which "is poured forth in the heart, by the Holy Ghost, who is given to us." "We will come to him and take our abode in him," says the Holy Spirit. As Christ dwelt visibly in the house of Zacheus, so does God by grace abide invisibly in the soul, creating in us a new manner of being, called supernatural, which is truly a life; and a friendship coloring that life; and an energy capable of producing works in keeping with both that life and that friendship. In other words, this grace flows incessantly, exuberantly upon us if we are properly disposed; and, by its presence in the soul, effects three marvelous results—first, transforming; then justifying and sanctifying; finally, energizing the soul unto a capacity for supernatural merits.

1. Mysterious as is this gift of sanctifying grace, it is plainly, by analogy, a kind of life: life not natural, but supernatural; not of the body, but of the soul; not human, but divine. We mean by it what St. Paul meant when he said: "And I live, now not I, but Christ liveth in me." We mean by it what the Apostle again meant by charity which, he said, "is poured forth in our hearts by the Holy Ghost, who is given to us." Hear again the voice of inspired authority: "Know you not that you are the temple of God and the spirit of God dwelleth in you?" "You are the temple of the living God." "Know you not that your members are the temple of the Holy Ghost, who is in you, whom you have from God; and you are not your own?" And so we may conceive this gift of God as entering into the soul by the infusion of the spirit of God—a virtue remaining therein, adhering to it so closely as almost to become a part of it, its very self, its very life; penetrating it in all manner, saturating it, so to speak, changing it into itself, somewhat after the fashion of iron plunged into the fire, which becomes heated and glows like the fire itself.

The statement may be an astounding one and far beyond our powers of comprehension, but it is not incorrect to say that this is a divine life and that the soul, which lives by grace, lives by the life

of God. Let us recall the story of the origin of the human soul, which is so familiar to us. It is recorded in the Book of Genesis. It is related how the hand of God first fashioned out of the slime of the earth a tenement of flesh to serve as a body to the first human creature, a receptacle for a soul. And while the lifeless form of Adam lay prone before Him, it is written: "And he breathed into his (Adam's) face the breath of life, and man became a living soul." Remember that it was out of His divine bosom that God exhaled His spirit into man—a principle of life which was a spark of the flame of divine life. And it is added that, looking complacently upon the work of His hands, gazing into the face of the creature Adam, God therein discerned His own image and likeness, as in a mirror. He had given life to all living creatures, but in none but man was His image reflected. There are degrees and qualities of life apparently. But only to the immortal soul of man did the Creator impart that quality of life which approximates so closely to that by which God exists as to be called an image and likeness and reflection of Himself.

Now, that life of the soul may be lost. It may also be recovered. The loss of life is death—if of the soul, spiritual death. But death to the soul, in all Scripture, in all Christian language, in the mind of all believers, is *sin, mortal sin.* Sin destroys the life communicated to the soul by the Maker. Sin quenches the flame breathed into it, defaces the image therein graven, undoes the likeness, annihilates the work within us, which, after its completion, God found to be good. In a word, being *mortal,* it kills; and that identity, as it were, of spiritual nature, which God's breath had established, and which existed between Creator and creature, ceases.

If this life can be recovered, how is it to be recovered? What can restore it? How shall this death be raised to life? How shall this image and likeness of God in the fallen soul of man be revived, and the divine face be made again to shine in his living spirit? But we know that it was precisely to effect this purpose that Christ Jesus came down to earth, undertook and accomplished His redeeming mission; that by His passion and death He acquired merit for sinful man, by which merit there was purchased for sinners that treasure which we call grace; that He founded a system of seven Sacraments or holy rites, through which this grace is again infused into the soul lost and dead to God by sin. It is grace, then, that repairs the deadly work of sin. And sin being death, what must grace be

but life? For what but life can raise from death! Grace, then, as far as we can know, must be life from the same source from which life originally sprang, when, before sin had appeared, Adam received it direct from the bosom of God. It is a sort of divine life, health and vigor, brought to us through channels of mysterious efficacy called Sacraments, resurrecting in us the child of God, making us live, move and have our being in Him, even as it was in the beginning the case with Adam, our first parent.

And this explains why we, who live by grace, are called again and again and again in the Gospels "sons of God," "children of God," "heirs of God," "co-heirs with Christ," who is God. Therefore, may we pray, as Christ taught us: "Our Father, who art in heaven. . . ." Although sharing with all living things a common origin in God by creation, of man alone and of no other creature was such language spoken, for in a sense far otherwise appropriate are we truly sons of God. And since sons can but reflect the nature of the Father, thus we have the meaning of these extraordinary words of St. Peter, so forbiddingly sublime and at first sight capable of overwhelming us with their awful significance: "By whom (Christ) he (God) hath given us most great and precious promises, that by these you may be made *partakers of the divine nature.*" Verily, then, by grace we live, not we, but Christ liveth in us.

2. "Behold thou art fair, O my love, behold thou art fair!" Thus does the heavenly Spouse address the soul to which it is wedded by grace. The title of Christian or Catholic does not make us friends of God, but the indwelling of the Holy Spirit in our souls by grace alone makes us His friends. The early pastors of the Church called the faithful "just," "the saints," not because theirs was a heroic virtue and sanctity, but because in them Christ did really abide in holy joy and peace and friendship, as once He did visibly in the house of Zacheus. "This day I must abide in thy house. And he (Zacheus) made haste and came down and received him with joy." The friends of God are the truly faithful, in whom sin is not, but the love of God by grace. And, therefore, it was that, when one came to Him and begged to be admitted to His intimacy, he was bidden to "go first, be reconciled to thy brother, and then come to me." There is no beauty in death; men have a horror for the grave and the trappings of mourning. So there is no attraction for God in the soul that, deprived of spiritual life, is steeped in the

death of sin. Such a soul is repulsive to God. Grace alone gives us the peace and joy of the Lord.

It is plain what grace does to the soul in order to make it beautiful in the sight of the Maker. "I will pour upon you clean water," says Ezechiel, "and you shall be cleansed from all your filthiness." When the hideousness of sin is removed, the soul is justified; it is sanctified, when it is adorned and clothed in the garb of primitive innocence, according as holy David speaks: "Thou shalt wash me, and I shall be made whiter than the snow." Thus, with the quickening of the soul by the fire of the Holy Ghost, all malice is expelled and that warmth enkindled which is love and affection. By means of the supernatural vitality imparted to the soul there is brought out, in all its divine effulgence and beauty, the image and likeness of the Creator which sin had defaced. There remains not a stain or blotch or trace of sin, which is ugliness; but that charm of purity, that fair loveliness, that sweet innocence, which charm the eye of God, which make the soul resemble the Son of Man "in whom he was well pleased."

"And God saw all things that he had made, and they were very good." Of course. Whatever is from God and, in any sense, of God, is precious in His sight. He had created life, and many were the varieties thereof. There was the plant, the tree; they live, grow, develop, put forth leaf and bud and blossom and fruit, and multiply after their kind. To such there is a charm and beauty which, in a human sense, we call "grace": "Consider the lilies of the field. . . . Not even Solomon in all his glory was arrayed like one of these." And then He beheld ranging over meadow and plain those noble shapes, instinct with animal life, which see and hear and feel and move and know pain and pleasure. We speak of the "grace" of their carriage, movements and activity. And they, too, pleased the eye of God. And then came man, the king of all creation, sharing with the lower beings the vegetative and animal life, but crowned with that still higher perfection of thought, of intelligence, of self-government and free choice. And God seeing all the things that He had made, found that this was the noblest, the most excellent, the best. And how infinitely more precious in His sight must man be, if his soul, instinct by grace, lives a divine life, like unto that whereby God himself lives, if he is become His son and child, if in him the Maker beholds as in a mirror His own image and likeness!

And why? Doubtless for the same reason that a man may be pleased with a flower, fond of a pet animal, love even a child that is a stranger to him; but all this is nothing as compared with the affection which he bears to his own child. And why should not a father gaze with fondness and love on the child which is his own flesh and blood, a being endowed with the same life as himself, which he himself gave? Why should not a father's child be more dear to him than the child of another? Just so does God love His own; just so, in His children by grace does His eye take greatest delight. That creature He loves with a love that no human parent has ever felt for his offspring. It becomes, in the language of Holy Scripture, "as the apple of his eye." And hence it is that the grace of God and the friendship of God are terms used by us indifferently to mean one and the same thing. When we say, for example, that the Sacraments give or increase grace in us, give life to the soul or strengthen it, unite us with God or deepen that union, these are several ways of expressing the same marvel of God's dealing with men.

3. But sanctifying grace is something more than a state of new being and of favor in the sight of God; it is a new energy which gives a supernatural quality to works which we perform. Every being acts and produces according to its nature. The branch can yield fruit only by that virtue which is brought to it from the parent trunk. Good fruit is the product of a good tree; the bad tree can bring forth naught but what is bad. Now, "I am the vine," said the Lord, "and you are the branches. As the branch can not bear fruit of itself, unless it abide in the vine, so neither can you unless you abide in me" by grace. Among the works of man there are those which he performs unassisted by heaven; these springing from the natural man alone, are natural works and are deserving merely of a natural reward, such as this world offers. Others are sinful works; and these are "fruit unto death." But he who accomplishes good, while instinct with that supernatural virtue which is communicated to the soul, labors supernaturally and will reap a supernatural reward. And this is "bringing forth fruit unto God"; this is acting "according to God." When St. Paul in vision heard Christ's consoling word, "My grace is sufficient to thee," it was an answer to the query of the disciples of the Lord who asked: "What shall we do that we may work the works of God?" For it is they who are just and holy by reason of the spirit dwelling within them,

and they alone, that perform holy works and are in a position to deserve consideration from God for all that they do.

Out on the lake Peter toiled on in the darkness. With might and main he labored, dragging the waters with his net, while the hours passed and night spent itself on his fruitless task. Morning came, and Peter uttered his complaint: "Master, we have labored all the night and have taken nothing." No wonder. He worked not under the eye of the Master; Christ was not with him. Peter striving alone in the night unsuccessfully is a perfect image of the soul exerting itself for heaven without the presence and light and strength of God by grace; its works have no price, they are not stamped with the seal of the supernatural. But when the Lord came, and Peter at His command let down the net on the right side, great was his astonishment at the multitude of fishes the net inclosed. Then it was day, then Christ was nigh, then did he know on which side to cast, then were his strong arms nerved and steadied for a haul such as he had never dared hope for. Let, then, the sinner labor and struggle as he will; "If I have not charity," says the Apostle, "it profiteth me nothing." The source of all our merit for heaven is the grace of God which is infused into our souls by the Holy Ghost.

This does not mean, of course, that He abandons to their fate sinners, that is, those who by unrepented sin are not united with Him and live not in His friendship, and who therefore can in no manner make an advance toward Him. It means that, while remaining enemies of God and dead to Him, no work proceeding from them has value directly unto salvation. But through God's great mercy, they may perform actions naturally and morally good; and in response to these, actual grace may be vouchsafed to them, and thereby the means afforded of rising out of their sinful state and acquiring a supernatural standing with God. The beggar starving by the wayside will die if no one assist him. But if a good samaritan lifts him up and cares for him and heals his wounds, and, setting him on his feet, gives him the wherewith to start in life anew, the reclaimed unfortunate may one day become a millionaire. In like manner is God willing to give back life to the spiritually dead and restore the health and strength forfeited by sin, in mercy to those who deserve not and can not deserve it. But until this transformation is effected by a communication of sanctifying grace salvation is impossible, heaven is inaccessible, chaos

yawns between Creator and creature. As says holy Job: "If he withhold the waters, all things shall be dried up."

And this is why grace is called the "fountain of water springing into life everlasting." It is the heavenly seed sown in us, the germ of immortality. It is the power which alone makes spiritual success possible.

What a priceless treasure, then, is this gift of sanctifying grace! What a masterpiece of God's almighty power is the soul that is alive with it! What a supremely noble being is man thus informed! We are now what we one day shall be in the glorious felicity of our lasting home; for grace and glory are but two modes of the same life, the one for time, the other for eternity. True, this glory hath not yet appeared to us who are still imprisoned in the flesh. But "dearly beloved," says St. John, "we are the sons of God; and it hath not yet appeared what we shall be. We know that when he shall appear we shall be like to him, because we shall see him as he is." We now see only through the mirror of faith; later when the clear vision shall dawn upon us, the reality will be the same. Then God will come and abide in us, and we in Him, even as He now does by His holy Spirit, but in an invisible manner. Let only God dwell in our souls during this life, and He will continue to abide therein endlessly in the life to come. If we would be His friends hereafter, it behooves us to be His friends here below. And the measure of our assurance of that bliss will be the measure in which we shall have realized in us, in the midst of the temptations and evil of this world, the truth which St. Paul spoke of himself: "And I live, now not I, but Christ liveth in me."

# III. CO-OPERATION WITH GRACE—PERSEVERANCE IN GRACE

BY THE REV. FERREOL GIRARDEY, C.SS.R.

"We do exhort you that you receive not in vain the grace of God."—II Cor. vi, 1.

*SYNOPSIS.—Of ourselves we are powerless in the work of our salvation. With God's grace we are all-powerful therein. God gives to each man sufficient grace for his salvation, and yet so many are eternally lost, (1) for not co-operating with grace, and (2) for not persevering in grace.*

*I. Co-operation with grace.—Salvation, the joint product of two factors—God and man. Illustrated by a pagan fable; "Put your shoulder to the wheel." Grace necessary to keep the commandments; it is of two kinds—interior and exterior. Enumeration of exterior graces. We must make a good use of them. Enumeration of interior graces. The chain of graces; its importance; how lost. Fatal result of the abuse of grace.*

*II. Perseverance in grace.—To be saved we must be in the state of grace at the hour of death. Necessity of persevering in sanctifying grace by using the means given by St. Alphonsus. First means, leading a good practical Christian life. Second means, shunning the proximate occasion of sin. Third means, prayer, especially in time of temptation. Fourth means, mental prayer, or meditation. Fifth means, devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary. "A true servant of Mary will not be lost." By co-operating with grace we may, when the occasion requires, be able to practise heroic virtue. Examples of this. Let us imitate those who sanctified themselves in the same state of life as that we live in.*

Of ourselves we are powerless to save our soul, for our divine Saviour says expressly: "Without me you can do nothing" (John xv, 5). Without God's help we can not even have a good thought conducive to our salvation, for, says St. Paul, "not that we are sufficient to think anything of ourselves as of ourselves, but our sufficiency is from God" (II Cor. iii, 5). Without the divine assistance or grace we can not even utter a short prayer or invoke God for help. "No man," says the Apostle of the Gentiles, "can say Lord Jesus, but by the Holy Ghost" (I Cor. xii, 3). "Grace," says St. Vincent Ferrer, "is the root of the spiritual life," that is, grace alone renders our efforts and actions supernaturally meritorious for heaven. "We need," says St. Cyril of Alexandria, "the grace of God to render easy what is difficult, to smooth the rough ways of justice, for our strength if not upheld by God is as nothing."

We are, then, powerless of ourselves in all that concerns our

salvation. But with the help of divine grace we become all-powerful, for it endows us, as it were, with God's own power and enables us to overcome naturally insurmountable obstacles and to make cheerfully the most difficult and painful sacrifices in the way of salvation. Hence St. Paul says: "I can do all things in him who strengtheneth me" (Phil. iv, 13).

The infinite goodness and mercy of God deserves all our admiration and gratitude, for He bestows on each man sufficient grace for his salvation. "To each one of us," says St. Paul, "is given grace according to the measure given by Christ" (Eph. iv, 7). But if everyone receives from God enough grace for his salvation, how does it happen that so many men are eternally lost? Who is to blame for this? No blame can be attached to God, who is all goodness and justice. Let us this day seriously consider this most important and practical subject, and we shall easily discover that no one is lost except through his own fault, first, in neglecting to correspond with the graces God confers on him, and, secondly, in not using the means necessary to persevere in grace.

I. Co-operation with Grace.—The salvation of those who have come to the use of reason, be they still children or grown up to manhood or womanhood, is the product of two factors working in unison—God and man. Man can not alone save himself, as we have just seen. And God will not alone save man, otherwise He would not have endowed him with reason and free will. God will not save man against his will. Hence to effect his salvation man not only needs God's grace, which is always offered him, but he must also effectively will his salvation and make use of divine grace by faithfully co-operating with it. "God," says St. Augustine, "has created us without our co-operation, but He will not save us without it." In a word, grace will avail us unto salvation only when we make the necessary efforts on our part to be saved. Divine grace, we should be persuaded, will not do everything for us, for it is only a *help* to our personal exertions, which are as indispensable as grace itself to our salvation.

To illustrate this let us recall an ancient pagan fable. A teamster's heavily laden wagon was stuck in a deep rut, from which his team could not extricate it. He then began to invoke aloud the aid of Jupiter very earnestly. For hours he kept on crying out with all his might: "O Jupiter, the mightiest of the gods, help me out of this!" But it was all in vain, for the wagon did not move. Hearing

his cries to Jupiter a passer-by said to him: "Friend, Jupiter will never help a lazy man like you; first help yourself and put your shoulder to the wheel, and then you may expect Jupiter to help you." The teamster followed the good advice, and in a moment the wagon was out of the rut.

Many of us are, in the affair of our salvation, like that teamster, for we expect that God by His grace will take us to heaven without any effort or trouble on our part. But this is a sad, fatal mistake. "God," says St. Augustine, "is our helper indeed, but He bestows His help, His grace, only on those who willingly make the necessary exertions, for He does not save us as if we were inanimate things or beings destitute of reason and free will." Let us, then, earnestly put our shoulder to the wheel of our spiritual wagon and call upon God to help us, and He will bestow on us all the graces we need to proceed smoothly and securely on the road of salvation. He will enable us to effect with comparative ease what far exceeds our natural strength. "God," says St. John Chrysostom, "holds out His hand to thee; give Him thine."

To be saved we must keep the commandments. As this is, in our present state, beyond our unaided efforts, "God," says St. Augustine, "gives us grace to keep the commandments," and thus to save our soul. Grace given us for this purpose is of two kinds: interior and exterior. Among the exterior graces God gives us, are vocal prayer, the word of God, good reading, holy Mass, the reception of the Sacraments, abstinence, good advice, good example, sufferings and crosses. All these are for us helps of salvation. But they will not conduce to our salvation unless we make a good use of them and derive spiritual profit from them. For instance, the grace of prayer, which God bestows on us at every moment of our life, will avail nothing to us if we do not actually pray, and pray with attention, reverence, and humble confidence and true earnestness. Holy Mass, the word of God, will be of no help to us if we do not devoutly assist at them. The Sacraments will be unprofitable to us if we do not receive them with due dispositions and as often as we need them. Sufferings and crosses will not bring us to heaven unless we bear them with true Christian fortitude. Hence, if we wish to save our soul we must co-operate with the exterior graces God offers us in such abundance.

If we do not make a good use of them, we are like the man mentioned by Our Lord, who hid his talent instead of properly invest-

ing it, and was condemned for his neglect; or like the barren fig tree which, producing no fruit, was reprobated and ordered to be cut down and burnt: "Cut it down; why cumbereth it the ground?" (Luke xiii, 7). Such is the deplorable result of neglecting to profit by God's graces, of failing to co-operate with them. It behooves us, therefore, to make a good use of the many graces of salvation God confers on us, so that we may escape eternal perdition and secure a happy eternity.

God imparts to us also countless interior graces, consisting in the interior light, enabling us to discover our duty in the various circumstances of life, to perceive the dangers to our salvation and the means of avoiding them; also in interior strength to make the efforts requisite for observing the commandments, for keeping from sin, for overcoming temptations and subduing our passions; also in the divine inspirations to perform certain acts necessary or conducive to our salvation, such as shunning evil company, despising human respect, going to Confession, and the like. To the interior grace belong also all good thoughts, pious desires of heavenly goods, the warnings of our conscience, and the remorse of conscience after the commission of a fault.

Whenever we co-operate with grace we make a step forward on the way of salvation, gain merit for heaven, and are rewarded by a fresh grace. If we correspond with this second grace we receive a third and a better grace, and so on indefinitely as long as we are faithful. Thus we acquire holiness and render our salvation more and more secure. Thus we can see how graces are, as it were, linked together, so as to form a chain from earth to heaven. But if we fail to correspond with the first grace of a chain of graces, we do not receive the second grace nor the graces that would follow it, and thus we lose a whole chain of graces; and this may, in the end, prove the occasion of our eternal reprobation, for, in the designs of God, our salvation depends perhaps on that very chain of graces; and by failing to receive it through our own fault, we fail to obtain the grace of final perseverance, which is indispensable for our salvation. Such is the teaching of St. Alphonsus, Doctor of the Church.

Moreover, if, paying no heed to the warnings of our conscience, we do not avoid sin and its occasions, our conscience will, by and by, cease to warn us. Or, if we despise the remorse of our conscience after the commission of a fault, we shall gradually grow

reckless in the way of sin, until, at last, our conscience will cease to reproach us. And what will be the result? Our failure to correspond to these merciful graces of God will induce God gradually to withdraw His other interior graces, His light, and we shall fall gradually into a state of spiritual blindness as to our sinfulness and the danger we are in of eternal perdition; and no longer heeding any remorse or other interior grace, we shall become spiritually obdurate. In this sad state we shall be the blind slaves of our passions, and our hearts will be hardened to every inspiration, to every warning and exhortation, and God will then abandon us to our reprobate sense for having already abandoned Him and despised His graces. Thus we shall, like Saul and Judas, be justly cast off by God, and the inspired words of the prophet Samuel to the reprobate Saul will be applicable to us: "Because thou hast rejected the word (that is, the grace) of the Lord, the Lord hath rejected thee" (I Kings xv, 26). Such a one can yet be saved, but only by a miracle of grace, of which he is wholly unworthy because of his long abuse of divine graces. "We ought never to complain," says St. Bernard, "that grace is wanting to us, but should rather admit that we are often wanting to grace."

II. Perseverance in Grace.—To be saved we must be in the state of sanctifying grace at the hour of death, for he who dies in the state of mortal sin shall be lost forever. Many co-operate with grace and live in the state of grace for a time, and even for years, but in the end cease co-operating with grace, yield to some temptation, commit mortal sin and lose sanctifying grace, persevere in sin and die in God's enmity. This deplorable end has been the fate of many who had once been very holy, who had been looked upon as models of Christian virtue.

If we earnestly wish to be saved it behooves us to strive with all our might to correspond constantly with divine grace, that we may keep from mortal sin, and thus never lose the sanctifying grace we received at Baptism, and which we either never lost or recovered by a good confession in the Sacrament of Penance. To persevere in grace we must necessarily make use of all the requisite means. Let us learn what these means are from that great, learned and most zealous Doctor of the Church, St. Alphonsus, who has written so much and so clearly on this subject.

1. The first means of perseverance in grace is living a good Christian life in the faithful observance of the commandments of God

and of the precepts of His Church, in making constant use of the means of salvation, in always corresponding with God's grace, in a word, in living up to our faith. We can make our perseverance doubly secure, if we try to lead a pious Christian life, that is, if we do more for our salvation than is absolutely required by the precepts of the Church. For this purpose we should endeavor to hear Mass every day, if possible, and to go often to Confession and holy Communion. The devout hearing of Mass is a source of numberless graces and blessings for the whole day, and, therefore, a powerful protection against sin. Frequent Confession keeps the soul in the state of grace and is a powerful restraint from sin. Frequent and fervent reception of holy Communion—the Bread of angels, the Bread of the strong—imparts wonderful strength to overcome the enemies of the soul and to practise virtue.

2. The next means of perseverance in grace is to shun the proximate occasion of sin. A proximate occasion of sin is a certain person, a certain place, a certain amusement, or a certain thing, which invariably causes us to sin grievously whenever we frequent or use it. What is a proximate occasion for some persons, may not be so for others. Hence it behooves each one to shun those persons, places or things which invariably lead him to commit mortal sin. To expose one's self, without real necessity, to a proximate occasion of sin, is already a grievous sin in itself. He who does this under the plea that he does not intend to sin and will surely avoid sinning therein, is actually guilty of presumption and of tempting God, just as much as if he were to cast himself headlong from a great height with the expectation of being preserved from injury by divine protection. "Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God" (Matt. iv, 7), said our divine Saviour to Satan. He who unnecessarily seeks a proximate occasion of sin shows that he loves the danger of sin, and cares very little whether he commits it or not. Of such a one the Holy Ghost says: "He that loveth danger shall perish therein" (Eccli. iii, 27). It is clear that a sinner with strong passions and a weak will, will necessarily fall into grievous sin every time he thus frequents the proximate occasion of his sin, for by so doing he abuses divine grace warning him, by his conscience and his past experience, of his obligation to shun it by every means in his power. In such an occasion he is sure to be violently tempted, and he can not overcome such a temptation without special grace from God; and God will surely not then give it to him, since he is both

unfit and unwilling to correspond with it. Hence his fall into mortal sin takes place as a matter of course, and he loses divine grace through his own fault.

3. We can not, however, avoid every temptation. In fact, we may expect to meet many of them every day from the enemies of our salvation—the world, the devil, and our own flesh, our passions. Our life, as the Holy Ghost tells us (Job vii, 1), is a constant warfare. To be saved it behooves us to combat and overcome our temptations. But for this good wishes and good resolutions are not sufficient, for, as the saying is, hell is paved with good intentions. We are, of ourselves, weak and helpless, especially against our own passions. How shall we overcome temptations and persevere in grace? By prayer. In every temptation let us pray to God for help, for grace to overcome it, and He will enable us, helpless as we are of ourselves, to overcome even the most terrible temptations. St. Alphonsus tells us that it is a sure sign that we have not yielded to a temptation, if we have, as soon as we perceived it, prayed to Jesus and Mary to help us, for by doing so, we clearly show that we do not want to sin, and therefore do not yield our consent to it. God never refuses to help those who invoke Him in the time of temptation.

4. Another sure means of perseverance is the practise of mental prayer, that is, of daily meditating, or practically reflecting, on some of the mysteries of our holy religion, of the eternal truths, or on the four last things. "In all thy works," says the Holy Ghost, "remember thy last end, and thou shalt never sin" (Eccles. vii, 40). The prayer of petition to God for grace is the great and universal means of salvation. But, as St. Alphonsus says, he who never makes mental prayer does not know his real spiritual wants, nor how to pray properly for them. "It is almost impossible," says Cardinal Bellarmine, "to persevere in grace without meditating on the eternal truths." St. Alphonsus maintains that mortal sin and mental prayer can not abide together, and that a sinner who perseveres in making mental prayer will soon give up his sinful ways. The great St. Teresa vouches for the perseverance and salvation of him who daily makes a quarter of an hour's meditation.

5. Finally, true devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary is a sure means of perseverance. Mary is, as the Church calls her, the mother of divine grace, the mother of perseverance, the mother of Jesus Christ and our mother also. She is all-powerful with God,

who neither can nor will refuse to grant whatever she asks. As she is the refuge of sinners and our own most loving mother, she loves us with a truly maternal love, and has our interests at heart. She will, therefore, be ever ready to assist us in our wants and obtain for us victory in temptation, and will pray for us whenever we invoke her, "now and at the hour of our death," so that we may live and die in the grace of God. Hence, St. Alphonsus, resuming the teaching of the fathers and doctors of the Church, rightly maintains that a true servant of Mary can not be lost. Hence, if we wish to persevere in grace, let us strive to be true servants and children of Mary.

By co-operating with grace we are able not only to work out our salvation, however great our weakness and helplessness amid so many obstacles, but we may also, should the occasion require it, be able to practise heroic virtue, as was the case with the Apostles who converted the world; with the martyrs who underwent for the faith the most excruciating torments and a cruel death; with the holy penitents, who expiated their previous sinful life with frightful austerities; with thousands of youths of both sexes, who, notwithstanding their naturally strong passions and violent temptations, have led and yet lead a life of spotless purity and chastity; and with so many priests and religious, who, oblivious of self, devote their lives in caring for the temporal and spiritual welfare of the physically and morally wretched, and thus become martyrs of charity. All this is beyond the power of poor unaided human nature. But poor, helpless human nature, co-operating with divine grace, is capable of achieving wonders, and finds nothing impossible, for it says, with St. Paul: "I can do all things in him who strengtheneth me" (Phil. iv, 13).

How many in our state of life, as weak and as helpless as ourselves, have sanctified themselves by corresponding with grace, by using the same means of perseverance as are offered us! What they have done we also can accomplish, if we only will it earnestly, and faithfully use the same means. Therefore, dearly beloved, make use of the means of perseverance in grace, and you shall secure your salvation. Again "we do exhort you that you receive not in vain the grace of God" (II Cor. vi, 1).

## IV. THE SEVEN SACRAMENTS

BY THE RIGHT REV. ALEX. MAC DONALD, D.D.

"Every best gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no change nor shadow of alteration."—James i, 17.

*SYNOPSIS.—Man was created fit for heaven; fell from his high estate; was redeemed by the Son of God and means of grace given him to merit eternal life. These means are the Sacraments. They are seven in number and correspond to the chief needs of life. Visible forms are used (1) because God accommodates Himself to the needs of our nature; (2) to unite us more closely to one another. Three Sacraments imprint a character on the soul and cannot be repeated. Some are necessary only for those called to special states of life; others for all classes. How we should value these sacred channels of grace; how we should prepare ourselves for them.*

Man was created in a state of innocence, but, listening to the tempter, sinned and fell away from God. By reason of his sin he forfeited his high destiny, and could no longer claim any right to the glorious inheritance that God had lovingly prepared for him.

Seeing, however, the utter misery to which he had been reduced by his rebellion and disobedience, the Second Person of the adorable Trinity, with infinite condescension, resolved to redeem him from the slavery of the devil, and to pay the price of his ransom. Hence God became man, and in His human nature suffered and died, and by the shedding of His sacred blood offered to His heavenly Father a price of infinite value, a price sufficient to atone for the sins and crimes, not of the entire world alone, but of an infinite number of worlds, had there been an infinite number of worlds to redeem. His merits were such as to secure for us poor fallen creatures, not merely forgiveness, but strength to rise again from the slough of sin, and the grace to persevere and to sin no more. If we need light to see the path of perfection, and courage to tread that path faithfully and courageously to the end of our days, we know, with the certainty of divine faith, that these needs are abundantly supplied by the merits acquired for us by Jesus Christ. These merits form, as it were, an exhaustless ocean, from which every human being may draw, without ever draining it or drying it up.

But how, we may ask, are the infinite merits of the Man-God to be applied to our individual souls? That is the question; for it is one thing to possess the healing salve; it is another to know how to apply it to our wounds. It is one thing to possess a potent remedy, but it is quite another thing to administer it so that it may produce the desired effects. In the Passion of Christ we possess an unfailing source of all grace, so that the only question we have now to ask ourselves is, How are we to avail ourselves of such a source, and to draw the "waters of eternal life from the Saviour's fountains" (Is. xii, 3).

The chief means are the seven Sacraments, which Christ himself has instituted, and to each of which He has, by His divine power, annexed an altogether special virtue. They are Baptism, Confirmation, Holy Eucharist, Penance, Extreme Unction, Holy Orders and Matrimony. As the famous seven-branched candlestick, with its seven lamps, shed a brightness and a glory throughout the magnificent temple of Solomon, in the old dispensation, so the seven Sacraments shed a spiritual brightness and beauty throughout the still more magnificent temple of the Church in the new.

Since God is the author of nature as well as of grace, it will not surprise us to note a certain parallel running through these two orders. Thus the seven Sacraments correspond to the seven chief needs of life.

I. In the first place man must be born into this world. But he needs a spiritual, no less than a natural, birth. This is accomplished in the Sacrament of Baptism, by means of which he is born into the Church, and becomes in very truth a child of God.

II. But an infant is a poor weak creature, and must grow and acquire strength, or it will never be fit for the stress and battle of life, nor able to hold its own in the midst of a cold and opposing world. And a similar weakness is felt by the newly born Christian in the spiritual order. Hence the Sacrament of Confirmation has been instituted to strengthen and fortify the soul, and to raise it, as it were, from the weakness of childhood to the full vigor and strength of manhood. One can be born but once, and one can reach man's estate but once, hence Baptism and Confirmation, which correspond with the birth and the maturity of the soul, can be received but once, and may never on any account be repeated.

III. But even when a man is grown up he still needs food and nourishment to enable him to continue to live and to exercise his

energies. The same holds good in the spiritual order. Hence the Blessed Sacrament has been instituted to be the very food and life of his soul. "Unless you eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, you shall have no life in you." "I am the bread of life; if any man eat of me, he shall live forever" (John vi). And following out the analogy still further, we find that man is subject to maladies of various kinds, which call for a physician. When suffering from cholera or fever, or any other disease, he discloses his trouble to the physician, who at once sets to work to cure him.

IV. So is it in the spiritual order. Our fever is pride; our fever is ambition; our fever is lust, or avarice, or gluttony, or hatred. Our soul, subject to many spiritual diseases, needs a remedy and a physician just as much as our body. And how is this need met? By the institution of yet another Sacrament, namely, the Sacrament of Penance, in which the penitent consults the spiritual physician, and is freed from his spiritual ailments and diseases by the power of absolution.

V. But the human race must be propagated, and children must be born to supply the place of the thousands that daily fall beneath the keen sickle of death. To marry is the natural and the ordinary ambition of most men. But it is a crisis in their lives. On their marriage day they enter upon a new life, and take upon themselves a fresh set of duties and obligations, and need correspondingly special graces and helps. Hence, here again, God mercifully comes to their assistance, and has instituted a special Sacrament for their special benefit. Thus Marriage is no longer a simple contract, but a great Sacrament, by which special graces are conferred, in virtue of which the contracting parties are able to bear, with true Christian fortitude, all the tribulations incident to that state, to preserve a mutual love and fidelity to one another, as the indissolubility of the bond of marriage requires, and to bring up their children in the love and fear of God.

VI. But something more is still needed for the perfection and completeness of a Christian society. To serve God properly men need instructors and teachers to fulfil His law; it must be duly proposed to them by competent persons; and if they are to avail themselves of the Sacraments, there must be men set aside to administer them. This shows at once the need of yet another great Sacrament, namely the Sacrament of Orders, by which a select few are set aside and receive the power to preach the Gospel (Matt. x, 18), to conse-

crate the Holy Eucharist and to offer up sacrifice (Luke xxii, 19), to forgive sin (John xx, 22), and to perform other important and sacred functions. Hence St. Paul observes: "Every high priest, taken from among men, is appointed for men in things that appertain to God, that he may offer up gifts and sacrifices for sin" (Heb. v, 1).

VII. There remains one more important crisis in a man's life to be considered, and that is the solemn act by which he yields his spirit up to God, when his earthly course has run. There is no more important and no more critical moment in a man's earthly career than when he has to lay down his earthly task and to appear for judgment before the dreaded tribunal of almighty God. At that last moment all the powers of hell unite to harass and distress him, and, if possible, to drive him to despair. It is a moment which is to decide his fate forever and ever, and on which his eternity depends. If help and protection and confidence are ever needed, it is especially in that last contest, upon which everything turns. And here again we note the goodness and benignity of God, who has instituted the Sacrament of Extreme Unction to meet this special trial and danger, and to help the anxious soul to pass through the throes of death with calmness and resignation and fortitude.

It is the Council of Trent itself that especially calls our attention to the need for this Sacrament. "As our most merciful Redeemer, who desired that His servants should at all times be provided with wholesome remedies against the darts of their enemies, in the other Sacraments gives Christians the greatest helps to enable them to pass their days in a Christian manner, so He hath fortified the latter end of our life with the most powerful protection of the Sacrament of Extreme Unction. For, though our adversary seeks and seizes, during our whole life, every possible occasion of ruining our souls, yet *there is no time wherein he more vehemently exerts all his strength* and art to ruin us entirely, and destroy, if possible, our confidence in the mercy of God, than when he sees the last moment of life approaching" (Sess. xiv; *in loco*).

Thus we see that the seven Sacraments supply seven great wants, and enable man to pass successfully through the seven chief crises of his life. Now we may here observe that, though the graces they bring to the worthy recipient are spiritual and impervious to the senses, yet they are conveyed by means of visible forms. Why, it may be asked, should God bestow His supernatural favors upon

us by means of outward signs and material symbols, such as oil, in Extreme Unction, and water in Baptism?

The reason is because He adapts His methods to our nature. We are not pure spirits, but beings, composed of body as well as of soul; so that, even in our most spiritual operations we constantly make use of material and physical elements.

Are not my thoughts and my reasonings of a spiritual nature? Certainly! There is neither length nor breadth nor thickness nor size nor color nor shape to an intellectual idea. Yet, when I wish to convey that idea to others I at once proceed to clothe it in language; and to express it in words and sounding sentences, and it is borne along into the minds of others by sensible signs, which either strike the ear, or else (as in the case of writing) address themselves to the eye, but are, in both cases, material.

In a similar way God makes use of visible things as the vehicles of His invisible graces and blessings. In Baptism He cleanses the soul through the washing of the body; and in the Blessed Sacrament He feeds the soul by the consecrated species which His minister places on the very tongue of the communicant. The *external* action is such as to symbolize the effect of the *invisible* grace, though, of course, the action is a real cause, as well as a symbol. Thus the pouring of the water on the living, palpable flesh of the child both suggests and yet effects the interior and invisible washing and purifying of the soul within, which really and truly takes place, only in a manner impervious to the senses. And the species of bread, beneath which is concealed the very Body and Blood of Christ, suggests and announces to every beholder that the sacred Body and Blood of Christ, so received, acts upon the soul, as bread acts upon the body, *i. e.,* feeding it and strengthening it and sustaining its life and vigor.

Signs and ceremonies appointed by men, or even by the Church, for devotional purposes, do not convey grace, nor do they forgive sin, since they are not of divine institution. The Sacraments, on the contrary, are directly instituted by God himself, and it is He that gives supernatural efficiency to material instruments. It is God, not man, who acts in the Sacraments. The ministry of men, the substances used, the words uttered, and so forth, are but the conditions under which He acts; but in all cases the chief agent is God, who remits original sin in Baptism, absolves in the Sacrament of Penance, consecrates in the Mass, and so on, of the

other channels of divine grace. Hence, as compared with the Sacraments, all other ceremonies are what St. Paul calls mere "weak and needy elements" (Gal. iv, 9).

But, there is a further reason why God should convey His graces under visible forms, *viz.*, to unite us all more closely together. The Church is a single, perfectly organized society, and all its members form but one mystical body, with Christ as its head. In fact, unity is the chief mark of the true Church. But how is this unity to be exhibited to the world and made manifest? Not only by all acknowledging one supreme head, the Pope, but also by all participating in the same Sacraments and sacrifice. Since the Sacraments are conferred under visible forms, we can not receive them without giving public testimony of our faith, and of our fellowship with the millions of other Catholics spread throughout the world. We thereby prove ourselves to be members of the same Church, and sharers in the same benefits, and sheep of the same divine Shepherd, who leads His flock into rich and fruitful pastures.

Most of the Sacraments may be repeated, as the need arises. There are three, however, which impress an indelible character on the soul, and these can be received but once. We have already alluded to two out of the three: namely, Baptism and Confirmation. To these must likewise be added the Sacrament of Holy Orders. The "character," as it is called, is a mark impressed upon the soul by each of these three Sacraments, which denotes that the person who bears it has been in some special way consecrated and dedicated to the service of God. Thus the mark impressed in Baptism denotes that the person who bears it has been made a true member of the Church of Christ, and is entitled to all the other Sacraments of the Church, and to eternal fellowship with Jesus Christ. Should he forfeit this title, and be lost, the character still endures—but for his greater torment—for it will remind him forever in hell of the high state from which he has fallen. The character received in Confirmation denotes that the person who bears it has been duly received into the militia of the Lord, and has engaged to fight manfully and perseveringly on the side of justice and right, so long as life lasts, and foes have to be overcome. Finally, the character received in Holy Orders denotes that the person upon whom it is impressed has been consecrated to serve at the altar, to administer the Sacraments, and that he has received exceptional powers for the advantage of souls committed to his charge.

Since the Sacraments are the divinely appointed channels of grace, we can not value them too highly, nor show gratitude enough to God, who has so lovingly and so generously placed them within our reach.

As to their necessity, we may observe, in conclusion, that though all are necessary, yet not all are necessary *to all classes* of persons. Some of the Sacraments are intended for particular persons and states of life, and those only are obliged to have recourse to them who embrace those states, such as Holy Orders and Matrimony. The other five are intended for the common wants of all Christians; and therefore all are obliged to receive them, under pain of forfeiting the special graces they confer, the privation of which must entail serious spiritual loss. This is clear, since Christ is free Master of His gifts, and may require what conditions He pleases from His creatures.

And as the fruits of the Sacraments will be more or less abundant, according to the more or less perfect dispositions of the recipient, it is of the utmost importance that we should carefully prepare ourselves for their reception, and that we should approach them with a full sense of our great need and of God's infinite goodness in placing such efficacious remedies within our reach.

## V. THE SACRAMENT OF BAPTISM

BY THE REV. F. M. HARVEY

"Amen! Amen! I say to you, unless a man be born again of water and the Holy Ghost he can not enter the kingdom of heaven."—Matt. xxviii, 19.

*SYNOPSIS.—The Necessity of Baptism.—All men are called to be saved, hence all called to be baptized. A special call to the children of Catholic parents.*

*I. The Place and the Meaning of Baptism.—Its fundamental necessity attested (1) by Christ, (2) by the Apostles. Baptism engages for the offspring the blessings of the same covenant that covers Catholic parents. Neglect in this regard as unnatural as disowning the child.*

*II. The Ceremonies of Baptism.—The essential ceremony is simplicity itself. The full rite, however, pregnant with blessings for the one baptized and with spiritual lessons for the beholders. (1) The exorcisms. (2) The sign of the Cross on the forehead and breast. (3) The placing of salt in the mouth. (4) The touching with spittle. (5) The threefold renunciation. (6) The anointing upon the breast and upon the shoulders. (7) The pouring of the water. (8) The white garment. (9) The lighted taper. Application. What is the practical bearing of these ceremonies upon our daily life?*

*III. Sponsors.—Who they are. What their character should be. Children under twelve or fourteen debarred. The relations entered into between the child and its parents. The duties of the sponsors. The tendency of parents to ignore the spiritual importance of sponsors.*

*IV. Lay Baptism.—All men may baptize. Directions for lay Baptism. If the child is supposed to be dead. Duty of Catholics to know this simple ceremony. The importance of being properly instructed. Necessity of employing Catholic doctors in childbirth.*

*V. Conclusion.—The value we should set on this Sacrament. The dangers of delay. The grace that is to be won in recalling our Baptism and the significance of its ceremonies. The glory of the baptized soul.*

The kingdom of heaven is isled, as it were, by the water of Baptism, and all who would enter must pass through the cleansing stream. All men are called upon to enter the Church of God. To those who have lived only the natural life, whose motives are selfish instincts, whose passions have never known the restraints of conscience, and whose external life has been but the expression of worldly policy, there must be a change of heart, followed, when instruction has done its work, by the Sacrament of Baptism. Others who have been brought up in some faith alien to Christ's Church, be they pagans, Jews, or heretics, must undergo a change of mind as well as heart. They must change the whole opinion of the head respecting religion, as well as the bent of the heart. Their nominal

and intellectual belief must undergo a radical change; but that is not sufficient, they must make entrance into Christ's kingdom through the Sacrament of Baptism.

The children of Catholic parents are candidates *ipso facto* for spiritual adoption. In a sense, they are "sanctified from the womb," they pass into Christ's Church as they pass into the conscious experience of life. Children so born are to be received into the arms of their parents and treated as the sacred property of God's Church. The Church lays claim to them at the very outset as her own. She supposes that they will walk from their childhood in newness of life, and to that end is her prayer for them. Properly trained up by spiritual teaching and examples, under the blessing of the Holy Spirit, by whom they have been regenerated, they are never to know of a time when they were not included in the promises of Christ. Instead of being driven forth as aliens, to run wild in the world, as are children of many so-called Christian sects, having no part nor lot in the blessed shelter and inheritance of Christ's Church, they are always to be folded within its tender security. The Church comes forward in the person of the child's Catholic parents—the divinely and natural appointed guardians of these young souls—and presses them to her own gracious bosom and feeds them on her own heavenly truth.

Consider for a moment the place and the meaning of Baptism. Its fundamental necessity in the religion Christ came on earth to found is sufficiently attested throughout the New Testament. The Saviour himself, notwithstanding His divine nature, submitted himself to it, "that he might fulfil all justice." So early in His ministry as His conversation with Nicodemus, while He was announcing the grand principles of His new kingdom, He spoke of the new birth as requiring both the Holy Spirit and water. "Unless a man be born again of water and the Holy Ghost, he can not enter the kingdom of heaven." He enjoins its universal observance through the Church in all nations and in all ages, in His last charge to His disciples. "Going, therefore, baptize all nations in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost," and, in addition, He insists on the necessity of Baptism. "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved, and he that believeth not shall be condemned." The object of this Sacrament is no less clear throughout the rest of the New Testament. Those whom St. Peter converted on Pentecost were first baptized. Those to whom the same Apostle

was preaching in the house of Cornelius received Baptism after the Spirit of God had descended upon them. St. Paul, after his conversion, spent three days of fasting and prayer, his penitent heart poured out like water before God, but neither fasting nor prayer nor spiritual agony had cleansed him of his sins; there was necessary for his justification, the reception of this Sacrament. At the words of Ananias, "Arise and be baptized, and wash away thy sin," he rose up and received the cleansing stream. Wherever the Apostle taught, through Macedonia, through Greece, through Asia Minor, his progress is marked by his Baptisms. "Teach and baptize," had been the Saviour's injunction. He that believeth and is baptized, and he only, shall be saved. It was ever and always the outward sign of that single fact—the beginning of the life in Christ, the new birth. It was applied to adults and children indiscriminately; for we read of whole households baptized. Whenever any person was converted, young or old, he was baptized, and that was the sole ceremony of admission to the Church.

In the case of Baptism of children of Catholic parents, it is the outward sign, and consecrating seal, that the children who receive it follow the organic law of their parents, and belong wholly and entirely to Christ and His Church. The Church comes forward and stretches out her arms with holy sprinkling to claim and bless the new-born immortal. The parents and the sponsors engage, for the offspring, the blessings of the same covenant that covers themselves. Parental love, if it be Christian and Catholic, can not do less. To neglect, or to seriously delay, would really be worse than the unnaturalness of disowning the child; for in the latter case they are only turned out of the earthly home; in the former, out of God's spiritual home and denied the saving nurture of the Christian family.

As befits a rite so necessary to Christian life, the essential ceremony of Baptism is simplicity itself. In case of necessity anyone who has the intention of doing what the Church wishes to have done, may administer the Sacrament by taking water, pouring it on the head of the person to be baptized, and saying, while pouring it, "I baptize thee in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." But, also, as befits a rite of such great importance, the Church has elaborated a ritual, pregnant with blessings for the one baptized and with great spiritual lessons for those who understandingly behold it.

By way of instruction, we shall consider these ceremonies one by one, note the duties of sponsors, and see what is the place of lay Baptism in the economy of the Church. The ceremonies of Baptism are so many reminders of the tremendous graces bestowed on us in the Sacraments and of the solemn obligations we take upon ourselves.

At first the exorcisms are pronounced. The spirit of evil is rebuked and commanded to depart from the child. "Depart from him, unclean spirit," says the priest, "and give place to the Holy Ghost, the Paraclete." How can this fail to remind us that no spiritual growth is possible while evil, or an affection for what is evil, has an abode in our souls?

The priest breathes upon the child as Christ breathed upon the Apostles when He bade them receive the Holy Ghost. This signifies the breath of the Holy Spirit that God sends upon us when the spirit of evil is driven from our hearts. The sign of the Cross is made on the forehead and on the breast of the child; on the forehead: that we may understand that no human respect is ever to deter us from acknowledging Christ; on the breast: that we may know that the Crucified is to be forever enthroned in our hearts.

The salt placed between the lips of the child, with the words, "Accept the salt of wisdom; may it be to thee propitious unto life everlasting," signifies the preserving power of God's Holy Spirit against the corruption of sin, and is to remind us that we must cultivate a taste for those spiritual works that make Christians the salt of the earth. Our words and our acts are to be seasoned with Christian prudence and wisdom, and the savor of a spiritual life is to be forever ours.

As Christ touched with spittle the eyes of the blind man and put His finger into the ears of the deaf man, so the priest touches the ears and the nostrils with saliva. He touches the ears, as St. Ambrose says, "that they may be opened to hear the commands of God, and the nostrils that he may receive the good odor of faith and devotion."

Here follows the threefold renunciation of Satan and all that is his. "Dost thou renounce Satan?" says the priest. "I do renounce him," answers the sponsor, speaking for the child. "And all his works?" "I do renounce them." "And all his pomps?" "I do renounce them." In the words of the Catechism of the Council of Trent, "He who is to be enrolled under the banner of Christ must

first enter into a holy and religious engagement that he abandons the devil and the world and will ever detest them as his worst enemies."

That we may realize the necessity of fortitude, of meeting the duties of life in a courageous spirit, we are anointed with holy oil upon the breast, and the sign of the Cross is made with oil upon the shoulders, that we may realize the necessity of praying for grace to bear the crosses and the trials of our mortal life.

After this, the water is poured on the child's head, the words ordained by the Saviour are pronounced, and sin, like an evil mist, rises from the soul, while the splendor and the glory of God's grace comes upon it and fills it with the life of the redeemed, and the stainless soul stands upright before that God whom "none but the clean of heart can look upon and live."

Upon the head of the newly baptized the seal of consecration to God's service is placed by the anointing with holy chrism; a white garment is put over him, as the robe of innocence and purity replaces that of sin; and a lighted taper put in the hand to warn the soul to prepare for the coming of the bridegroom with a faith that is ever bright, and a charity that is ever burning.

All these ceremonies, eloquent of God's mercy to us and our filial obligations to Him, are means of grace in themselves, but, like many means of grace, they may have little practical bearing on our after life because of our neglect to get a comprehensive, living knowledge of their significance. An important question for us to-day is, "How does the thought of our Baptism and its attendant ceremonies affect our daily lives; what do they mean for us personally?" Are we among that number to whom the mystery of Baptism, though it has actually regenerated us in God's sight, has remained a mystery still, because we have not made its promises operative in our daily lives, and because the blessings flowing from its ceremonial have not fully penetrated our conscious minds and our hearts? Esau was called a *profane* person, though he lived, as far as we know, an ordinarily good, moral life. For the literal meaning of profane is one who is outside the fane or temple, one who is not admitted to the inner shrine and allowed to take part in its ceremonies and privileges. Are any of us in this sense profane persons, even while members of God's Church, living outside our spiritual privileges and blessings, even while apparently enjoying them? Some of the rites of our faith were called holy mysteries

by the early Christians, because only the initiated could partake of them with spiritual profit. Are some of these ordinances mysteries to us still, because we have not allowed the ever present Saviour to initiate us into them, the door has been opened only to the outward enjoyment, not to the inward, spiritual enjoyment of them? How foolish to live in ignorance of so many truths that would make us wise unto salvation! How foolish not to put out at interest the spiritual wealth which the Church has placed in our hands!

We now come to consider the sponsors in Baptism. Sponsors are they who present us to the Church for Baptism, who make answer when it is a child that is to be baptized, and who become sureties for the performance of those promises made in the child's name. To them belongs the obligation also of instructing the child in its Christian duties.

The selection of sponsors, the relation they enter into to the person baptized, and the duties they contract, are not sufficiently considered nowadays, and a few words of instruction in this regard will not be amiss. The sponsors, since they are to exercise vigilance over their spiritual children and try to form them in the spiritual life, should of necessity be exemplary Christians themselves. The parent who selects as godfather or godmother one whose life is at variance with the teachings of the Church is neglecting a sacred duty. Since they stand as spiritual parents to the child, it follows that mere children, those under twelve or fourteen years of age, should not act as sponsors. It is a rule that at least one of the godparents should have reached that age and should have been confirmed. Sponsors should understand clearly that they enter into spiritual relationship with the child and with the child's parents, so that marriage between the godfather and the child or its mother, and between the godmother and the child or its father, would be null unless a dispensation were obtained. No impediment exists between the godfather and godmother. The duties of the god-parents are to see that the child is enabled to keep its baptismal promises; that is, have sufficient knowledge of its religion and the necessary moral support to follow a Christian life. However, these duties are never assumed unless the child's parents through death or by reason of moral unfitness can not perform their obligations to the child.

There is a tendency to make the choice of god-parents a mere

social compliment, having as much spiritual significance as an invitation to dinner. This is due to a lack of consciousness of the spiritual obligation entailed. Consider that the parent is establishing a real relationship between the soul of the child and the godparents; that they stand in the presence of the Most High and present the infant to its God; that, in the name of the child, they voice the most solemn promises known to man, and obligate themselves to enable the child to fulfil those promises; that the sponsors are to take the new-born soul and lead it into the splendor and the glory of Christ's kingdom; and when you have considered these great realities, ask yourself if you will degrade that relationship to the level of a social call. The character of the sponsors should be a vital issue, and it will be to all those who view this Sacrament with the eyes of a living faith.

Let us glance briefly at the question of lay Baptism. The bishop and the priest are the ordinary ministers of the Sacrament of Baptism; an extraordinary minister is the deacon; but in case of necessity any man or woman may baptize, even the father or the mother of the child, though this should not be done save when no one else can be had. The ceremony is simplicity itself. Let the one who is to baptize take natural water, that is, such as comes from the faucet, from the well, from the sea, or rain water; let him pour it upon the head and say while pouring, "I baptize thee in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost," taking care that the water touches the skin, and does not merely flow off the hair. If it be impossible to wet or wash the head of the one to be baptized, you may put the water on the arm, breast, or foot, or upon any part of the body that is naked. Mark, too, that the same person who pours the water must pronounce the words and must intend to do what the Church does.

Even if a child is supposed to be dead, yet one is not certain of it, it is well to baptize it conditionally, saying, "If thou art living, I baptize thee in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost."

This simple ceremony is something every Catholic should fully understand, and to this end should consult a priest if he has any doubts of his ability to perform it.

As I have said, all, without distinction, may perform this right, be he Jew or Gentile, saint or sinner. By virtue only of his humanity and through the power given by Christ, he may regenerate

a soul with the waters of Baptism, and give it the crown of everlasting life.

The Catholic laity should understand their duty on this point, and I repeat, whatever doubts are in their minds as to how they should act, must be cleared up by consulting proper authorities. The ceremony is so simple that all should know it. The consequences of omitting it are so great that we should tremble lest, through our neglect, they be visited upon us. The fate of an immortal soul is at stake, a soul for which the eternal Son of God laid down His life. Let assurance be made doubly sure by engaging Catholic doctors in time of childbirth. Who can tell what accident at a most critical moment may cause the absence of one who in certain unforeseen circumstances may know how to administer the Sacrament? Who can say that the nurse or the friend can or will baptize the child in cases where a good Catholic doctor will not fail to do his duty?

What value do they set upon the Sacrament who put off the Baptism of their children for months, and even for years? Do they really understand the significance of the Sacrament? Do they believe that Christ was in earnest when He said, "Unless a man be born again of water and the Holy Ghost, he can not enter the kingdom of heaven"? Why do they endanger the eternal welfare of their children? If the child is to be called away soon, is it going as a spotless angel into the presence of the Most High, there to make intercession for its parents and win for them strength in life's combat and courage in life's sorrow? Or is it to be eternally separated from its God, and ever turn reproachful eyes on the parents who caused its exile?

Parents, have your children baptized in time. Bring the newborn soul to be cleansed at that torrent which flows from the smitten rock which is Christ. Let it be the child of your redeemed soul as well as your bodies, and make its eternal union with you in the presence of your God your care, as well as you do its temporal well-being.

And in the Baptism of each babe that we witness, let us recall our own Baptism and its sacred obligations. The soul that has been sealed and signed with Christ's stamp in Baptism can never be as if it were not baptized. For weal or wo, its sacred character is eternal. How this thought should lift us above the petty claims of our every-day life! The thought of the white garment placed upon

us in Baptism will help preserve the delicate blush of spiritual modesty, the surest safeguard against temptation to things that are gross and low. The memory of our solemn pledge, to renounce Satan and all his works and pomps, will be a stimulus, enabling us to break with sin and the habits sin has clothed us with. If our temptations seem stronger than we can bear, and life's cross is heavy on our shoulders, a thought of the strengthening oil with which those shoulders were signed will lighten the burden and steel the vigor of our soul against the tempter's power. And the signet of the Crucified upon our heads is the sacred promise of the Saviour that we are His own, "bought at a great price," and that we, together with every soul that bears that sign, have a right to enter with Christ into His kingdom.

# VI. THE SACRAMENT OF CONFIRMATION—THE GIFTS AND FRUITS OF THE HOLY GHOST

BY THE REV. H. G. HUGHES

"They laid hands upon them, and they received the Holy Ghost."—Acts viii, 17.

*SYNOPSIS.—I. We are told here of a Christian rite distinct from that of Baptism. St. Paul conferred the same rite upon the disciples of St. John the Baptist at Ephesus. It is a rite consisting of an outward sign, and an inward grace, and was instituted by Jesus Christ: i. e., it is a Sacrament—the Sacrament of Confirmation.*

*II. Why a sacred rite conferring the Holy Ghost, since that is done in Baptism? It is due to the fact that God has instituted a parallelism between the things of the natural life and the things of the spiritual life of grace. Thus He instructs us and encourages us. The symbolism of the Sacraments comes from our blessed Lord Himself; though the Church has added certain details not fixed by our Lord.*

*III. The parallelism between the Sacraments in their relation to supernatural life; and the ordinary means of developing and sustaining natural life and that life itself.*

*IV. The symbolism of Confirmation. Laying on of hands: the holy oil.*

*V. The sacramental character: Its permanence; its spiritual nature; its purpose—a perpetual claim to the graces of our state. Necessity of "stirring up the grace that is in us by the imposition of hands."*

*VI. The Gifts of the Holy Ghost: Their place in the parallelism between the natural and the supernatural. They are like natural instincts. But they must be cultivated. We may know whether we are cultivating them or not by the presence or absence of the fruits of the Spirit in our lives.*

In that passage of the Acts of the Holy Apostles from which my text is taken, dear brethren in Jesus Christ, we are made aware of a rite of the Christian Catholic religion which, from the context, appears evidently as one of great importance. We are told that when the Apostles who were at Jerusalem heard of the successful preaching of the Gospel to the Samaritans by St. Philip the Deacon, who baptized many converts to the faith, they sent the two Apostles, St. Peter and St. John, without delay to lay hands upon them that they might receive the Holy Ghost. In the nineteenth chapter of the Acts we read of a precisely similar occurrence. The great Apostle St. Paul, who, at the time that the Samaritans received the Holy Spirit, was a persecutor of the Church of God, had been

converted by a special revelation from on high, and in the course of his third great missionary journey, found at Ephesus certain disciples of St. John the Baptist who were well disposed but lacked instruction in the religion founded by Him of whom the Baptist was but the herald. The Apostle instructed them, conferred Christian Baptism upon them, and then laid hands upon them that they might receive the Holy Ghost, whose divine presence immediately upon the reception of the sacred rite was openly revealed by the miraculous phenomena of tongues and prophesyings. It is clear that we have here a rite distinct from that of Baptism, a rite considered of great importance—the effect of which is to confer the Holy Ghost himself upon those who receive it. Such a rite, found in the practise of the holy Apostles themselves, could have only one origin—it must have come from the Lord and Master of the Apostles, who had taught them all that pertained to the Church which He came to establish, and who brought to their remembrance by the indwelling in them of His Holy Spirit all that He had said to them. We have, then, in this sacred rite of which we read in this earliest and inspired history of the Church of God, an ordinance instituted by Jesus Christ consisting of an outward sign by means of which is conferred an inward grace. In other words, we have here nothing less than one of the seven great Sacraments of the New Law; the very Sacrament that we know by the name of Confirmation. When St. Peter and St. Paul went down to Samaria, and laid hands upon the Christian converts there, and when St. Paul laid hands on the newly baptized disciples of the Baptist, they were doing what every Catholic bishop has done since whenever he has held a Confirmation in his diocese.

But why, it may be asked, should a second rite be needed to confer the Holy Spirit, since that same Holy Spirit, according to Catholic teaching, is undeniably given in holy Baptism? Dear brethren, we have here an example of the wonderful condescension of God Almighty in dealing with us. He respects, as it were, our particular nature as human beings—as being, that is, composed of a twofold element, spiritual and material—body and soul. These very Sacraments by which divine grace is conveyed to us are composed of an outward, visible, material element that we can perceive with the senses of the body, and of an inward spiritual element—the grace, that is, which through the instrumentality of the outward, visible actions of God's ministers is conferred upon the soul. And

in the ordering of these holy Sacraments, as well as in their individual essential constitution, almighty God has made a parallel between bodily and spiritual things. This He has done for our edification and instruction, and in a manner that appeals even to the simplest and most lowly. The weak things of the world has He chosen to confound indeed the wise and prudent; but at the same time to teach the simplehearted, to confirm their faith, to rouse their love, to awaken their gratitude. The pouring of a little water is an outward sign that speaks fitly and naturally of bodily cleansing; and it is made by divine power and divine wisdom the vehicle of that cleansing grace which washes the soul. And, as I have said, in the ordering of the Sacraments as a series we find the same beautiful and simple mode of teaching, reminding us of certain parables of our divine Lord in which, under familiar and easily understood images, taken from the things of nature, He made known great truths of God. We are reminded also still more forcibly of those miracles in which our blessed Saviour "suited the action to the word" and to the effect He intended to produce, and healed by means of a symbolical outward sign. And, indeed, the symbolism of the Sacraments came directly from our blessed Lord. It was He who ordained that the outward sign should fittingly represent the spiritual grace. "Except a man be born again of water and the Holy Ghost, he can not enter the kingdom of heaven." These are the words of Christ himself, ordaining the outward sign of the Sacrament of Baptism. And on another occasion He prescribed the sacramental words that should accompany that sign; "Go, ye, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost" (Matt. xxviii, 19). It is true that the Church, in virtue of that Apostolic power and authority which resides in the Holy See, has added certain sacramental signs in the case of some of the Sacraments, for not in regard to *all* the Sacraments did our blessed Lord determine in precise detail what those signs should be. In some of the Sacraments, as Baptism and the Holy Eucharist, Our Lord did determine in exact detail what should be the outward sign and what the sacramental words; in other Sacraments He prescribed the general signification of the outward acts, and even some of the acts, as the laying on of hands in Confirmation and Ordination—but He left it to His Church to amplify the sacramental words and signs; though, be it noted, the Church has never subtracted or taken away any sacra-

mental action that, coming down by uninterrupted tradition, originated with Christ himself. Thus, though in the Sacrament of Orders we now have many additional outward signs, the original action of laying on hands and the words of our divine Lord, "Receive the Holy Ghost," are retained as essential; and in the Sacrament of Confirmation, which is our subject to-day, we still have the "laying on of hands," of which we read in the Acts of the Apostles, though the Church has added the significant symbolism of the anointing with oil.

There is a parallel between the life of the body and the life of the soul; and this parallel is followed out in the divinely instituted series of the holy Sacraments. Baptism, cleansing the soul from the stain of original sin, also gives to it for the first time the life of grace divine. Thus it is regeneration—the being "born again" of which Jesus spoke to Nicodemus. As natural life comes to us by natural generation, so the supernatural life of grace comes by the regenerating flow of the baptismal waters. But the life of an infant is precarious and feeble. It requires strengthening that it may grow into the maturity of manhood. So, too, with the life of grace. There comes a time when the Christian soul must meet the violence of temptation and be called upon to profess the faith boldly before the world. With those who are baptized as adults, this time comes at once; and so it has ever been the practise of the Church to strengthen her adult converts as soon as possible after Baptism with the Sacrament of Confirmation. In primitive times, indeed, when the newly baptized might at any moment be called upon to witness to their faith with their blood, Confirmation was given at the same time as Baptism. In the case of those baptized, as most are now, in infancy, Confirmation is conferred as soon as the child grows old enough to be subject to temptation, and has to take up the battle against sin and range himself under the banner of the Cross.

It does not belong to the present subject to follow out in detail the parallel that exists between the rest of the Sacraments in their relation to the life of grace, and the aids and preservations that God has given us for the development of our natural life in their relation to that life. You will have been instructed in this matter in other discourses in this series of sermons. Let it suffice here to recall that Confirmation is to the soul what all those means that are used to strengthen and develop the life of an infant are to the body. And as in a matter of symbolism more than one parallelism may be

found for our instruction, the Church, by the introduction of the anointing with oil, has supplied us with a most speaking symbol. In ancient times the athlete and the soldier, all who were to engage in a contest requiring strength and endurance, anointed their bodies with oil to give suppleness to their limbs. Thus the anointing in Confirmation may be taken as a sign of the strengthening effect of this Sacrament. Or, again, the anointing with oil had in the Old Testament the signification of consecration, and nothing forbids us to see in its sacramental use in the Church Catholic the same idea. Does not the New Testament speak of the unction, the anointing of the Holy Spirit? "Ye have an unction from the Holy One," writes St. John in his first Epistle, and "the anointing which you have received of Him remaineth in you," and "the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth" (I John ii, 20, 27). This is none other than the unction of the Holy Ghost, who was promised to us to lead us into all truth.

In Confirmation, then, the outward visible sign consists in the laying on of hands, as significative of the descent of the Holy Spirit, and the anointing with oil as signifying the grace of strength. The inward grace signified, and then and there conferred upon all who receive the Sacrament worthily, is the strengthening grace of the Holy Ghost, who comes into the soul to produce that grace within us. The anointing is made with the sign of the Cross to remind us that we are to fight as courageous and perfect soldiers of Jesus Christ in virtue of the strength then given to us. In holy Baptism we received for the first time the supernatural life of grace; now, in Confirmation, that supernatural life is strengthened by an increase of sanctifying grace, and by the special gifts of the Holy Ghost.

In common with others of the Sacraments, Confirmation confers upon the soul what is known as a character, or distinguishing mark. This character, like that impressed on the soul in Baptism or in Holy Orders, can never be effaced. It will be for all eternity the glory of the saved, and undying shame to the lost. What, then, is this character or mark? You will easily perceive, dear brethren, that it is nothing visible to the eye, or perceptible by any bodily sense; for it pertains to the spiritual order and affects the soul. Nevertheless, it is a reality, and an important reality. The things of the spirit are, indeed, more truly real and unspeakably more important than the things of the body. All this material world, with everything material and palpable which it contains, is but indeed

an image and shadow of the eternal realities, and of the supernatural creations of God. The soul that has received a sacramental character is not as it was before. God, and those to whom God gives spiritual vision—the blessed angels and saints—see the difference. And God recognizes always and everywhere the sacramental character that has once and for all been imprinted upon a soul. And this character has a definite purpose in the economy of grace and the scheme of salvation. God needs not that our souls should be marked with a character in order that He may know who has been baptized and who not, who has been confirmed and who not. It is for our instruction and for our encouragement that He has ordained that certain Sacraments should thus characterize our souls; for the sacramental character constitutes a special claim to those actual graces which we need in order to be faithful to that state and condition to which the Sacrament raises us. Thus by Baptism we are raised to the condition of children of God by adoption. To live up to that state we require a constant series of actual graces enabling us to do good works, to overcome temptations, to merit, to persevere. The baptismal character is a standing claim to these graces. So, too, with Confirmation. This Sacrament makes us soldiers of Christ. To live up to that glorious calling, to fight our battle and to profess boldly our faith, we have constant need of actual graces. The character given in Confirmation is a standing claim to them. This is why the Sacraments which confer a character are not repeated. They need not be; for the sacramental character is a permanent effect which never ceases to be present in the soul. How encouraging this is for us! We need not look back to our Baptism and our Confirmation as long past events the good effects of which are over and done with. No; the grace of those Sacraments can be renewed by virtue of the character that is forever impressed upon the soul. "Stir up the grace that is in thee," wrote St. Paul to Timothy, "by the imposition of hands." He was speaking chiefly of the character of the Sacrament of Holy Orders which Timothy had received; but his words apply equally well to Baptism and Confirmation. Though we have sinned, and fallen short, far short, alas! of the graces of those great Sacraments that we have received, yet the sacramental character is still there, and by true repentance and prayer we can stir up the grace that is in us, that we received by the laying on of hands and the unction of the Holy Ghost.

And now a few words as to the gifts of the Holy Ghost that He brings with Him when He comes into our souls at Confirmation. They are enumerated in the beautiful prayer of the Confirmation office which the bishop recites over those who are to be confirmed: "Almighty everlasting God, who hast deigned to regenerate these thy servants with water and the Holy Ghost; and who hast given to them the remission of all their sins, send down upon them thy sevenfold spirit, the holy Paraclete, from heaven: The spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and fortitude, the spirit of knowledge and piety. Fill them with the spirit of thy fear. . . ."

God knows, dear brethren, how weak and helpless we are; how, even though endowed with the supernatural life of grace, and aided by actual grace, we are still liable to go astray and to fall amid the thousand temptations that surround us; to give way before the violence, or to fall a prey to the crafts and wiles, of that host of evil angels which besets us. So He gives us these special gifts of the Holy Spirit, that we may be secure on all sides. You know, dear brethren, that we are endowed as regards our natural life with certain instincts, half unconscious in their operation, which are of the greatest value in preserving our bodily life. The instinct of self-preservation, which comes into play at once on the appearance of sudden peril, and saves us by some quick instinctive movement; the instinct of fear, by which we scent physical danger from afar, and avoid it; the instinct of practical good sense, by which we almost automatically conduct the affairs of everyday life; the instinct of curiosity or desire for the acquisition of knowledge, by which we "pick up," as we say, that elementary knowledge of men and things, without which we should soon be at a disadvantage. What these natural instincts are to natural life, the seven gifts of the Holy Ghost are to the supernatural life. A difference, indeed, there is; and an important one. The natural instincts may be left to themselves more or less; but the supernatural gifts of the Spirit must be more consciously cultivated. At the same time, just as the care a man takes to keep his body and mind in a healthy condition, will insure that the natural instincts will be in good working order, so, too, by careful attention to the healthy supernatural life of our souls; by prayer, by devout use of the Sacraments, by spiritual reading and consideration of the great eternal truths, we shall be cultivating and deepening by God's grace those precise gifts of

the Spirit that He has implanted within us. We may know whether this is so with us by observing whether the fruits of the Holy Ghost, the result of His seven gifts, are visible in our lives. "The fruit of the Spirit," writes St. Paul to the Ephesians, "is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance"; and in the same Epistle he says, "the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness and justice and truth." These are things which our individual lives will show us to possess or to lack. If we have them not, let us stir up the grace of our Confirmation, and beg almighty God to renew in us the precious graces and gifts which He then bestowed.

## VII. HUMAN DIGNITY FROM THE HOLY GHOST

BY THE RIGHT REV. JAMES BELLORD, D.D.

"Thou shalt send forth thy spirit and they shall be created; and thou shalt renew the face of the earth."—Ps. ciii, 30.

*SYNOPSIS.—I. Great is the dignity of man. He stands at the top of God's creation. He is the lord of the created universe. But his real dignity is not in this. Man is both natural and supernatural. On his natural side he has pre-eminent qualities, yet he is material and part of the animal kingdom.*

*II. God has given man a greater dignity than that to which he aspires. He is more than a superior animal (Ps. viii, 6). He is the son of God. He has a supernatural life. The source of this life is the Holy Spirit. The work of the Holy Ghost in the creation of the world; in the creation of man—in the creation of the Church; in the regeneration of the world—in the life of each individual. This dignity differs vastly from that given by beauty, wealth, talent, position. It raises man above self and sin to the sphere of the infinite and eternal. This life is exercised by faith and by conscience and manifested by religion with its doctrines, its morality, its worship. Many to-day despise this life, but this is an exhibition of degeneracy.*

I. The dignity of man is very great. He stands at the summit of creation; he is the greatest and noblest of God's works on earth, he is the lord and master over all the rest of creatures. All the works of divine power and wisdom during the long days of creation were a preparation for man. From nothingness and from chaos God brought forth the varying kinds of life through gradually more perfect forms until He arrived at man. To Adam God committed dominion over the beasts of the earth and all the fowls of the air, bringing them to him to see what he would call them (Gen. ii, 19). The universe was to serve man for developing and exercising his faculties, for his use and pleasure, for his study and for the material of science; that he might learn from it to admire the greatness of his Maker and to thank Him for His goodness.

Yet man is so puny, so weak, so fickle, so wicked, as to seem both unfitted and unworthy to exercise this great charge. It is so wonderful as to seem incredible to some minds that a universe so great should have been made for the sake of a being so small; and they would regard man as a mere accident in the great system of life. And, indeed, when we think of the infinite majesty and perfect self-

contained happiness of God, when we look upon the enormous spaces in which the stars revolve, the millions of ages during which God has evolved His works, when we see the splendor, the intricacy and the glorious harmony of it all, and compare it with man's short span of life spent in scraping the surface of one of the minor planets, we may well ask, "What is man that thou art mindful of him or the son of man that thou dost visit him?" (Ps. viii, 5). But the dignity of man is not to be measured by his bulk, or his strength of arm, or his length of days on this earth; God has implanted in him a something which makes him greater than the eternal mountain peaks, or the resistless rush of the cataract, or the heavens dotted with a million star-worlds. "Thou hast crowned him with glory and honor, and hast set him over the works of thy hands; thou hast subjected all things under his feet" (Ps. viii, 6, 8).

Man has a double life and two sets of qualities, the natural and the supernatural. On the natural side, that by which he is connected with this lower world, he has various qualities which give him pre-eminence in it. The chief is reason, a possession which sets a broad, impassable gulf between him and the highest of animals; and connected with this is freedom of will. From these spring many other qualities and powers, such as speech, the sense of beauty, knowledge and speculation, social organization, and progress; and in virtue of these man has been able to subdue the whole earth to his sway and turn it to his purposes. It is in his reason and liberty that he bears the image and likeness of God, and by them that he holds the place of God as lord of the lower world.

These faculties, the faculties of the natural man, these are what men value the most, and by which they estimate their dignity. As these are their natural possessions, they often refuse to recognize that they hold them from God, and should use them in subordination to His will. They give themselves credit for their natural powers, and for all that they produce or discover by means of them. Having liberty to serve or to rebel against God, they consider that their dignity requires them to maintain their independence against the yoke of His sacred laws.

Proud as man may be of his natural abilities, these do not constitute his real dignity. These gifts are the lowest ones given him by God, and great as they are they connect him with the inferior and less worthy world. Man, intelligent and free, still belongs to one of the great divisions of the material world; he is the highest

member, but still a member of the animal kingdom; he belongs to the great class which embraces reptiles, fishes, birds, and beasts; and among them he belongs to the sub-class called mammalia. Man, as being a rational animal, has great glory and honor as compared with the rest of animals, yet he is formed from the same slime of the earth as they. He is separated from them by something which can not be a development from the faculties of the animals, yet which is shadowed forth and suggested by them. The faculties which we see in animals seem to demand the creation of man with his superior faculties, in order to complete and crown the gradually ascending scale of the lower life of earth.

The fashion of the human body is more delicate and more beautiful than that of the lower animals. The poet wrote of the upright stature and the lofty brow which man raises toward the abode of God. But this is only an accidental and superficial advantage; some animals approach to it. It is a mere difference of more or less. Man is more perfectly developed, but his structure is much the same as that of the beasts; he has the same organs and the same senses; his skeleton is modeled like theirs. There is a general similarity between the man's arm, the horse's leg, the wing of the bat and the bird, and the fish's fin. Nay, as to his body, man seems to be more closely related to those animals which are most useless and most despised.

Take that which is man's distinctive prerogative, his intelligence. The brute creation have often a high degree of instinct that does for them the work of reason. But they are not without a certain rudimentary intelligence; they remember, they observe, they learn by repetition and experience, they form some simple conclusions, and can take means to carry out their desires. Men alone can speak, but animals have their inarticulate speech conveying their feelings of anger, pleasure, pain, alarm; the mechanism is the same as in human speech, and its object is the same. Animals, too, have sometimes what we may call the faculties of the heart. They are capable of attachment and enmity, or joy and regret; they show trustfulness, generosity, courage, perseverance. There are individual differences which constitute different characters among them as among men. Some of the great works of men are matched by the instinct of animals. The coral insects build up islands from the depths of the ocean, beavers turn the course of rivers to build their villages, the bees lay up treasures of golden honey for the future,

and ants make regular war on other tribes of ants, take prisoners, and reduce them to slavery. Thus the works of men and the works of the lower animals are parallel in a manner to one another, although they are in a different plane as to knowledge and responsibility.

How does the world estimate its own dignity and the dignity of its individual members? Is it not by such works and powers as I have just named? Not by supernatural gifts, nor according to the estimate of God, but it measures human dignity by the natural and lower gifts of men. Intelligence and temporal condition of life, material descent, works of engineering, earthly discoveries, hoarded wealth, fighting strength—things transient and material—these are considered the ground of human greatness. But while men raise themselves with pride on account of these prerogatives of theirs, the prophets of the day, men of science, are showing them how lowly are these gifts. They are drawing out their connection with the most savage and lowest tribes of men and laying stress on the relation of man, even in his intelligence and speech, with the brute beasts. This lowering of man follows closely on his pride. Yet men are proud of it, and they prefer to know and investigate those bonds which connect them with the lower world rather than those which bind them with and raise them toward the infinite.

II. Man aspires to greatness, but God has given him a greater dignity than he imagines or even desires. He is something more than a merely higher kind of animal. It is written, not "Thou hast made him a little higher than the brute world," but "Thou hast made him a little lower than the angels" (Ps. viii, 6). He belongs to another world quite separate from this lower one. Although connected with it on his bodily side, he yet stands as a class apart from it. His point of superiority over the lower world is not, then, any gift or quality which he shares with it; it is something in which they differ, and not that which they have in common. The animal is not merely a superior class of vegetable, nor the vegetable a superior class of mineral, even although on their boundaries they may seem to shade off one into the other. So man is not merely a superior class of animal endowed with an instinct which has developed into intelligence. He is, on his higher side, farther above the class of animals than they are above the vegetables. The human being, complete from the hands of God, is not principally a body to which a living soul has been communicated, as a sort of

secondary thing to perfect the body and enable it to do its work on the surface of the earth. With the lower animals indeed the life or soul holds such a position, and is given for the sake of the body. But with man it is not so. The spiritual soul, with its supernatural life, is the principal thing; the body is for the sake of the soul, a temporary dwelling place, a prison even; and its purpose is to enable the soul to do its work on this earth, to work out its perfection, and make itself fit for an eternal life in the bosom of God. We are sons of God, endued with a special character, with special aspirations, and special qualities, all adapted to the exercise of that higher life. That which is animal and earthly in man ought to be kept in such subordination as hardly to obtain recognition in the definition of the perfect man.

Where shall we seek the source of this higher life, and of this distinction which separates man from the rest of creation? It is in that divine Spirit, the "Holy Ghost, the Lord and giver of life." He is represented to us in holy Scripture as perfecting the creative work of God, as infusing activity and energy into it. There are three special instances of this which we may consider. "In the beginning God created heaven and earth. And the earth was void and empty, and darkness was upon the face of the abyss" (Gen. i, 1, 2). By His word God created all matter, by the Verbum Dei, the second person of the blessed Trinity. After that "the spirit of God moved over the waters" (Ibid. 2). This moving means literally "brooding over," and is the same idea as the brooding of the parent bird over its nest, infusing from itself warmth into its young and bringing them forth into life. The Holy Ghost is, then, presented to us as generating all that abundant and various organic life, and all that motion of the inorganic (which is in a manner its life), which are manifested in every particle of matter.

It was the same when Adam was created. "God formed man from the slime of the earth" (Gen. ii, 7), like other creatures. Of these He had said, "Let the earth bring forth the animam viventem" (Gen. i, 24). The living soul or life of them developed from the life germs planted at the first. But not so with man. "God breathed into his face the breath of life, and man became a living soul" Gen. ii, 7). The material part was formed in the ordinary way of creation, but his soul, like the original life of the universe, was a new infusion, a breathing, an operation, again of the Holy Spirit.

Then we pass to the new creation by the word of God incarnate,

when the Church was founded. Our Lord had collected and organized the material. He had chosen the twelve Apostles. He had imparted His doctrine to them, given them the power of miracles and power over devils. There were a certain number of other followers gathered principally around His blessed Mother. Some preached, others took charge of their support and ministered to them. Yet when Our Lord left them to commence their work, all was void and empty. There was no life, no power of begetting a living society, till the Holy Ghost descended and poured out upon them the spirit of divine life. This last coming of the Holy Ghost, the coming on the day of Pentecost, is the new creation spoken of in the text: "Thou shalt send forth thy spirit, and they shall be created, and thou shalt renew the face of the earth" (Ps. ciii, 30). The presence of the Holy Ghost with us is the creation of a new life, the supernatural life of faith and grace. He is present in the Church, vivifying her in every action and in every member, and making her put forth innumerable forms of her life in every spot, and even on the most unpromising soil; in like manner as living organisms cover every inch of the earth, fill every drop of water and every particle of the air we breathe, and plant themselves on the arid surface of every mountain side. As each individual is incorporated into the Church by the Sacrament of Baptism, or recovers lost grace in the Sacrament of Penance, a new supernatural life is sent throbbing through his being from the central heart; and this supernatural life is naught else than the indwelling of the Holy Ghost with him. The Sacrament of Confirmation is the direct pouring forth of the same Holy Spirit upon each individual. He is giving therein His fulness with all His gifts, strengthening, illuminating, inflaming the soul, perfecting the likeness of God in it, and completing its supernatural life. This fulfils the prophecy, "And it shall come to pass after this that I will pour out my spirit on all flesh. . . . Moreover, upon my servants and handmaids in these days I will pour out my spirit" (Joel ii, 28, 29).

Here is the true dignity of human nature. Here is something which elevates man really and not in appearance. The dignity of wealth is communicated to a man by the possession of that which is inferior to himself. The dignity of strength and beauty is no more than what the animals possess. The dignity of position and estimation is often a thing which only overlies and conceals his real worthlessness. The dignity of talent is something which be-

longs to his merely natural and lower side. The supernatural life, through the Holy Ghost, is a thing which elevates him above the world, above matter, above self and sin, and which raises him to the sphere of the infinite and the eternal. This new life is exercised through faith and conscience. Faith is something beyond all natural faculties. It gives an intelligence of that which is beyond reason and experience, it grasps truths belonging to the future, the unseen, the divine order. It gives a higher certainty than any observation or reasoning. Conscience is the perception of a higher law than utility, expedience, or selfishness, recognize. It is the perception of God as the law of human action. When duly informed, cultivated, and elevated by the indwelling of the Holy Ghost, it becomes a new faculty of great delicacy. In these two powers of the supernatural man we have something quite apart from and beyond comparison with anything that we find in the animal creation. Animals have perceptions, they may make some approach to judgment and to language, but there is not in the highest of them the rudiment of any sense of an unseen world and of a moral law. On the other hand, there is no race of man, however barbarous, but has some crude notion at least of a supreme ruler, of another world, and of the intrinsic goodness or badness, apart from the pleasure or pain, of certain actions.

Our supernatural sense of God as truth and as law is not a sense which can be said to come to us from the slime of the earth, as do some of our instincts; they are from above; they are the source of all the real elevation and grandeur of the human race. Faith and conscience constitute religion, with its doctrines, its morality, its worship. Whatever men of modern science may say as to the germs of human faculties being found in an undeveloped form among the lower classes of creation, they can not pretend that anything corresponding even slightly to religion exists in any class of beings below man. So specially is this a capacity of the rational being, that the ancients considered those who were unacquainted with religion to be also devoid of reason. St. Augustine says that animals are without reason because they have no knowledge of God; and that God gave this knowledge to men by the fact of making them reasonable beings in His own image and likeness (Lib. Solil. viii). The religious faculty is the point of contact between the spiritual world of heaven and the world of this life.

There are great numbers, especially in these advanced and aspir-

ing days, who despise and hate the supernatural life, and who neglect even the natural manifestation of God which is made to them through their uncultivated reason. Such classes are destitute of true human dignity, they are in an inferior and degraded state. The qualities which make men loved and respected, which promote happiness and the general weal, remain in them in an undeveloped condition. They are on a downward grade; and the generations that succeed to the diminishing inheritance of divine life in them sink rapidly into a merely animal, sensual, selfish, unclean, lower state, which leads to decomposition and death. This is not evident to all, nor perhaps to many; to devout Catholics even, although this is a matter of certainty, it is a certainty that they hold by faith and not by sight. It is necessary to have looked below the surface of history, to have considered many lands and many races, before one can grasp the evidence of this truth. You perhaps may know of communities, energetic, daring, wealthy, full of the latest knowledge, able to apply it to every material purpose; they will consider themselves the true masters of the universe, the depositories of the highest human dignity. But you will soon understand how groundless are their claims when you meet with one of these rare communities where faith and supernatural virtue flourish. In them you will be impressed by the evidence of a higher life; you will find among them a dignity which does not exist in the material civilization of the other race. You will be astonished to learn what low ideals, what barbarism of manners, what degradation of morals, can exist side by side with an advanced material cultivation.

As I have said, this is a matter for faith rather than sight. Few have the opportunity of verifying it by experience. On that account it is the more important to impress it deeply on our minds, lest we forget where our true value lies. Let us ever remember that faith is the brightest light to guide us in all our undertakings, that our best interests are served by our keeping the laws of God, that no gain is worth the smallest sacrifice of Christian principle, that there is no peace or happiness when we are at enmity with God, that wealth, position, the praise of men, do not imply real worth, and that our only serious claim to love, esteem, and confidence, rests on that likeness to God "which is poured forth in our hearts by the Holy Ghost, who is given to us" (Rom. v, 5).

# VIII. THE BLESSED EUCHARIST

BY THE REV. C. P. BRUEHL, D.D.

*SYNOPSIS.—The doctrine of the Real Presence, the most beautiful and the central doctrine of the Church. We should strive to realize what this doctrine is to us. The Holy Eucharist is: 1st. The test and the strengthener of our faith. 2d. Our hope in the sorrows, trials, bereavements of life, most especially so in the hour of death. 3d. Our love, showing us the love of Jesus ever near attracting us to Him; saving us from the evil love of the things of the world, uniting us to our Saviour and procuring our eternal salvation.*

In the lowly tabernacle there is enshrined our greatest treasure, the heavenly, priceless gem, the saving Host, the glorious monument of God's grace and mercy, the admirable memorial of His undying love. And great it is, this wonderful Host; the sum of all mysteries, the life-giving element of the Church, the perennial source of life and light.

We should lively realize the grace of belonging to that one true fold of Christ, with which Our Lord abides and dwells unto the end of days, over which He holds outstretched His pleading hands, for which He daily sacrifices His virginal Flesh and Blood. We should thank God for being children of the Church that has an altar and a tabernacle, wherein resides the divine Guest.

But, worshiping and loving, let us try to understand the meaning of this mystery of God, to trace the influence of this saving Host on our religious life, to learn its power and efficacy. I shall demonstrate to you how it is the Sacrament of faith, hope, and charity. These virtues are the warp and woof of Christian life; they are its root, and its blossom. They embrace the entire compass of religious activity, and permeate all its manifestations. The Holy Eucharist is the Sacrament of universal power, the Sacrament of life, the Bread of life; it is the Bread that nourishes faith, sustains hope, and invigorates charity.

I. The Holy Eucharist is the Sacrament of faith. It is the test and the strength of faith.

At its very institution it became the test of the sincerity of the faith of Christ's disciples. Our Lord had proposed this wonderful

doctrine: "I will give you my flesh to eat; I will give you a heavenly bread, a more wonderful bread than that which I have multiplied by divine power. This bread is my flesh."

His words were plain, unmistakable and solemn. They were endorsed by the great miracle which He had wrought in their presence; they were supported by the divine authority of His person.

But some refused to believe: "This saying is hard and who can hear it?" They left Him, they abandoned Him, who had the words of eternal life, Him who was the way and the truth and the life and the light. They cut themselves off from the living vine and they became withering branches. Henceforth their faith was dead; they had not stood the test of faith.

And even now, as of yore, the doctrine of the blessed Eucharist is the touchstone of divine faith. It is the crucible in which the sterling gold of divine faith is separated from the alloy of human opinion. It creates that immense gulf between the true Church and the many false ones; between the Church of the present Christ and the churches of the absent Christ; between the living Church, living by the breadth of its Founder, living by His glorious presence, and the dead churches, dead because they have separated themselves from the living truth; dead because they have not upon their altars the sacramental Presence, the source of life and light. The church that has not Christ is a dead church indeed; Christ is the soul, the life, the vital principle, of the Church. Yea, they are churches without Christ, the churches of those who have rejected the blessed Eucharist, they are churches without life and light, churches without the living faith, for they have not stood the test of faith, as those unfortunate, forgotten disciples. How can they have words of life, since they have rejected Him who alone has words of life?

"But blessed are they that have not seen and have believed"; blessed are they that trust the words of eternal wisdom more than outward appearances. And we have this word, the word of God, and it dissipates all shadows of doubt and vanquishes all the voices of contradiction. This was His promise: "I shall give you flesh to eat. My flesh is meat indeed." And His promise lingered in His loving heart; it grew and waxed strong and it became a powerful desire. And this is the realization: "I have longed to eat this paschal lamb with you." The shadows of death were thickening about Him, the Cross was looming near, the night of the grave was gathering; His lips were chilled by the touch of agony, His brow

was clouded by the somber seal of eternity. But Our Lord had not forgotten His promise. And thus He left to His Church the glorious legacy of His continual presence: "This is my body."

And we believe. For Christ is the truth.

If this holy Sacrament is the test of our faith it is more: its strength.

Do you find that living faith in the divinity of Christ, that vivid, practical realization of His personality, in any other than the Catholic Church? It is because we breathe in our churches the air of the presence of Christ; we are continually reminded of Our Lord, because He is the Guest of our tabernacle; we kneel, even as Mary, at His feet; we feel our hearts aglow, our pulses throb with supernatural emotion, as the disciples of Emmaus. Tell me why the seed grows and swells and develops in the all-pervading warmth of the sun; and I will explain why our faith grows and is enlightened and quickened in the Catholic Church. It is the subtle, mysterious, noiseless, but ever active, influence of the sacramental presence of Christ.

It was at this source that the glorious martyrs, the uncompromising witnesses of our faith, drank that superhuman, unbending strength of their conviction, which led them to despise the threats of tyrants, to smile at the formidable array of racks, to court the embrace of torturing flames, and to offer their necks to the cruel stroke of the executioner's ax.

Truly, here lies the irresistible strength of our faith. A severe test it seems at first; but yet the invisible rays proceeding from the blessed Host overcome all difficulties. Hence our faith becomes a living, energetic faith; a faith that makes martyrs, that breeds virgins and heroes, that faith of which St. John says: "This is the victory that overcometh the world, our faith."

II. The blessed Eucharist is the Sacrament of hope. Hope supports our weakness and steadies our faltering footsteps. It is the staff on which we lean when the burden of life weighs heavily on our shoulders. There are moments in life when we feel the good in us fail, the enthusiasm for virtue ebb and the tide of evil rush in upon us; moments when the sense of guilt and unworthiness presses on our soul and benumbs its energies, when we believe ourselves forsaken by the genius of good and under the gloomy shadow of the dark angel; moments when we deem ourselves too feeble to resist temptations, too weary and disheartened to climb the rugged

pathway of duty. It is then that hope uplifts us, instils courage in our hearts and brightens the clouded horizon of our vision; it is hope that bids us raise our tear-stained eyes to the everlasting hills of bliss, to the glories awaiting us; it is hope that infuses new courage into our breast and breaks the spell of inactivity cast over our faculties.

But this hope, the kind companion of the dark hours of life, is born in our hearts by the holy Eucharist; it is this Sacrament that begets immortal hope in mortal breasts.

Christian hope lives on the promise of the presence of Our Lord. His words, "I will remain with you even to the end of time," give us this perfect assurance, this wonderful calm, this quiet anticipation of victory and final triumph in all the troubles and trials, in all the calamities of outrageous fortune, in all the assaults of temptation, in all the struggles of life. He, Our Lord, is with us, dwelling among us; and if He is with us He will help and shield us; He will ward off the evil, He will baffle the designs of our enemies. Yea, He is with us; with us in this blessed Sacrament; and therefore our hope can not die.

A ship was caught in a vehement storm. The waves were rolling high and threatened to engulf the reeling vessel in its mighty depths. Passengers were in despair, their faces pale with fear. Only a young lad showed no signs of alarm; with calm defiance he watched the uproar of the elements. And, asked if he did not fear the storm, he answered with naive assurance: "No, my father is at the rudder!" What a sublime confidence, an ingenuous trust, of the child in its father! It fears nothing in his presence; it believes in his readiness and his ability to help. And we have greater reasons for unlimited confidence. What shall we fear if God is with us? Men are powerless, the world is powerless, sin is powerless; God is with us. This presence of God in the holy Eucharist is the substance, the very soul, of our hope. Indeed, Our Lord will calm the tempests that arise, and He will steer the frail vessel of our destiny clear of shoals and rocks to the haven of eternal rest; for He is at the rudder. He is in the boat of our life as truly as He was with the disciples on the lake of Genesareth.

And this is also the secret of the invincibility of the Church: the holy Host is her shield, the tabernacle her fortress and citadel. The shafts of attack will be shattered; the fiercest onslaught of infernal hatred will be thwarted; no reckless power of hell or earth will ever

undermine the altar; for He who dwells on the altar is the Lord of hosts, the Invincible, the Almighty. The blessed Eucharist is the pledge of the perennity of the Church; the seal of her indefectibility; her strength, her victory. By it she defeats her most powerful enemies and conquers the world.

There is one thing we all dread and fear; at which all the instincts of our nature shrink and recoil; it is the gloomy hour of death, the starless night of the grave. When the fleeting splendor of the world grows dim, when the proud edifice of our fondest hope crumbles, when the lofty pillars of our bold self-reliance snap; when everything we gathered and treasured seems dust in our groping hands, when our vision is shrouded in a dark, dreary pall, and our dull eyes behold nothing but a limitless expanse of empty obscurity stretching into immensity; when yawning abysses surround us, when big black, hideous spots, ghastly visions of the deep, dance before our glaring, glassy eyes; when the great lidless eye of the dark gloats at us and chills our very soul; when every drop of our blood is cold and heavy, when the flickering flame of our life is unable to warm this mortal frame, when the very touch of the hand of a friend has a chill in it, when we hear the faint echoes of that distant, unknown land, as the monotonous murmur of the breakers; when we feel ourselves sinking, sinking into a bottomless, horrid pit, gaining no hold except on the frosty, bone-like hand of death; when finally we feel our memory wane and our consciousness extinguished, when this very flesh thaws and dissolves itself into a dew—at this dreadful, extreme moment we realize the utter uselessness of human help, the infinite horror of standing alone at the gates of eternity. This appalling solitude, this terrible silence, this awful uncertainty of things to come, this desert-like emptiness before us, this absence of human help and friendship, petrifies our heart, bewilders our brain and makes our thoughts totter and reel. Is there no help in this inevitable hour? Fear not, Christian soul, you will not be alone, when all forsake you. You will find comfort and help in this terrible hour; yea, you will find a companion over the bridge of death. When that gloomy hour comes, and human help fails, take with you into the night of death this adorable Host, this blessed Viaticum. He has conquered death and grave, He will lead you through night and darkness; and this most terrible of the horrors of death, that ghastly loneliness, will not terrify you. Jesus is with you in the hour of death. at this lonesome passage from time

to eternity. Even death is shorn of his terrors, the grave deprived of its gloom, when Our Lord is with us. In this holy Host we possess the happiest antidote against the terrors of death. At that hour He will be the only, only friend, the only companion on that melancholy journey. And though that insatiable abyss of the grave swallow and absorb everything earthly and human, it can not rob us of our eternal hopes and of the one true and everlasting treasure, for in this holy Host we have the key of heaven, the pledge of salvation, yea, heaven itself.

In persecution and trial, in sadness and bereavement, in sickness and agony, in life and death—the blessed Eucharist is our never-failing hope and solace.

III. The holy Eucharist is the Sacrament of love. It is the burning coal, the heavenly spark, destined to kindle the divine fire of love in human hearts.

Love is the greatest of Christian virtues, it is the perfection of Christian life, it is holiness itself. He who loves God can not sin; he who loves God can readily overcome the allurements of seduction; he who loves God is ready to make any sacrifice, will ever advance to greater sanctity. But this pure, hallowed love has a dangerous antipode; the vile passion of sensual love. The one a fair virgin of childlike innocence, a soft light of devotion gleaming in her heaven-fixed gaze, her brow redolent with the unction of consecration, her cheeks modestly flushed with the expectation of the heavenly bridegroom, her whole being wrapped in an air of exalted purity. The other—no longer a virgin, the wild fire of desire glaring in her lustful eyes, her cheeks aglow with feverish emotion, her forehead moistened by the heavy breath of passion, her presence clouded by the fumy, laden atmosphere of sensuality. And but too many follow the latter—and but too few adhere to the former; for sin and sensuality have a fatal attractiveness. Sinful love steals itself into the heart by the fascination of earthly things. There is a charm, an enticing beauty in the things of this world; they are clad in seeming loveliness; they court our affections and win our hearts. They snatch the heavenly fire from the altars of God and make it burn before perishable idols. Sin is allied to sweetness and wedded to graceful and bewitching elegance. Ah, we know that God is beautiful and amiable, that His sweetness surpasses all measure! Yet we do not feel it, we have not experienced it. And the sweet poison of earthly pleasure is

ever nigh, entering into our soul by all our senses, darkening our better understanding by its delirious, intoxicating fragrance.

But God has given us a remedy against the baleful and treacherous venom of sin and pleasure. He allows us to foretaste the sweetness of His love on this earth. He has given us a Bread containing all sweetness, filling us with disgust for the pleasures of sense. In the blessed Eucharist we taste the raptures of God's love; we are weaned from the deceitful joys of earth. Then earth has no attractions for us; we are no longer spellbound by its fleeting charms. We aspire toward heavenly beauty, we are filled with longings of eternity, we loathe the earth. A source of pure, living water wells up in our heart and quenches our thirst for happiness and love. This holy Sacrament imparts to us all the delights of heaven, and replenishes us with rapture and ecstasy. Nay, he who drinks at this limpid fountain shall not thirst forever, nor shall he crave the husks of earthly pleasure. For this holy Sacrament is meat, indeed, full of relish and strength; and drink, indeed, full of savor and intense delight.

Love seeks the presence of the beloved one. As a flower shut out from the sun would fade and droop, so would love languish and finally die, were it not continually quickened by the presence of the object of affection. Distance and separation have a fatal effect on love; they destroy the spontaneity, the warmth, the dewy freshness, of affection. But our dear Lord is nigh, He invites us to His glorious presence; we may have intimate intercourse with Him, we know His beaming eye is resting on us, watching and following us from the tabernacle. There is a living heart throbbing under that sacramental veil, brimful of kindness, overflowing with affection; there is an ear, listening to our prayers, ever responsive to our call. There is a living communication between the tabernacle and the lonesome worshiper, a sweet, tender commerce, an exchange of thought and affection between the disciple and the master. Indeed, our love can not flag, for it dwells in His endearing presence, for it basks in the smile of His kind face.

The highest form of presence is union; and this true love strives to effect. And, O admirable Sacrament! the holy Eucharist realizes this greatest ambition of love. Yes, God vouchsafes to us this blessed, happy union with Him in the holy Sacrament of the altar. This is the triumph of love; this satisfies our sublimest aspirations. We are privileged to rest at His breast; we are clasped in His di-

vine embrace. Truly, this is the Sacrament of love; for it is the Sacrament in which we taste the sweetness of the Lord, in which we are near to Him, in which we are gathered in His arms, enjoying the holiest transports of the chastest and purest affection. "He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, abideth in me, and I in him."

Dear friends, the greatness, the beauty, of this holy Sacrament should occupy our thoughts, kindle our hearts, transform our lives. Let this holy fire not be consumed in vain, let this heavenly seed not be doomed to sterility; plant, embosom this divine germ in your hearts and let it grow. It will make us holy, pure, saintly, godlike; It is the germ of grace, the germ of faith, hope, and charity; the germ of the eternal life of glory, bliss, possession, and rapturous love. Amen.

# IX. THE REAL PRESENCE

BY THE RIGHT REV. JAMES BELLORD, D.D.

"Neither is there any nation so great that hath gods so nigh to them as our God is present to us."—Deut. iv, 7.

*SYNOPSIS.—Religion is the drawing near of God and man.*

*I. God has always desired to be near man. He was near him in the state of innocence; near him after the fall; near him in all the wanderings of His chosen people, ever manifesting Himself, ever protecting them. The text fulfilled with regard to the Jewish race.*

*II. But this was merely a figure of what was to come. The Christian Church more privileged than the Jewish. This is evidenced by the Real Presence, the distinctive mystery of our religion. The great contrast between the Protestant and Catholic Church; the infinite distance between our Church and the sects. Hence the impossibility of reunion except along the one line.*

*III. The Blessed Sacrament, the life of the Church. It is the vivifying principle of her worship and of her indefectibility.*

*IV. The life throbs in every member of the Church; this life received in Holy Communion. It binds us together in real Christian charity; makes us loyal to the Church; gives us strength to overcome our passions, and the gift of perseverance.*

I. God approaching to man, and man approaching to God, that is the summary of religion. God approaching to man—this is what the great mysteries of our faith amounts to; this is the truth manifested in the divine works of creation, the Incarnation, Redemption, Heaven. Man approaching to God—this is the object of our striving in all the acts of religion, in faith, prayer, sacrifice, self-denial, death. This drawing near of God and man is what actually takes place in true religion. God descends from His throne, visits the brilliancy of His glory, and manifests Himself. He appoints conditions for men's approach to Him; then He enters into union with them, becomes their life, their strength, their comfort, and satisfies the desire of His own goodness to be with the children of men.

In the state of innocence God walked familiarly with Adam in Paradise. After the fall, He spoke frequently with the Patriarchs. When He chose a people for His own, and led them forth from captivity in Egypt, and organized them into a nation by the hand of His servant, He manifested Himself continually in various ways, convincing them of His protection, constant care, and actual

presence. In the text Moses calls upon the Israelites to recognize the dignity and the special privilege they enjoy, in having their God so present with them. He brings into comparison the idolatrous nations that they knew. These possessed much that the Jews might have envied. They had numerous temples, an imposing ceremonial, and the visible idols of stone and metal that so impressed the carnal mind. But in those temples was no spark of divine life; the gods were represented as holding themselves aloof from men, stern, cruel, revengeful. The Gentiles worshiped them from afar off in fear and trembling.

How different it was with the Jews! They held the actual presence of the living God, shown to them by visible signs. They were His creatures, His children, the objects of His love. He had elected them as His own and saved them from destruction. He gave them laws and ruled them as their King. From the time they left Egypt, God had been with His people in a pillar of dark cloud. On the march it went before them; when they were to halt, it came down and rested upon the Tabernacle; at night it became a column of fire. From the peaks of Mount Sinai, covered with the storm-cloud, the people had heard the voice of God proclaiming the Ten Commandments. Moses spoke with Him there, face to face; he came down bringing the law written by the finger of God on tablets of stone; and forever after his face reflected the glory which had shown from the face of the Lord. Stiff-necked, low-minded as they were, the Israelites could not but be impressed at times by the majesty of God's presence, the difference between themselves and less privileged nations. Without land, or home, or temple, or a visible god made with hands, they still saw that they were greater than all other nations, for none of them had their gods so nigh to them as the God of Israel was nigh to His chosen ones. The Tabernacle, with the presence of God, was also their life. In the desert or in the promised land it was the center of their national unity, the bond of their brotherhood, the object of their pride and their loyalty. Through captivity and dispersion their hearts always turned to the Holy City of Jerusalem, and to the glorious Temple of the Living God that crowned Mount Sion.

II. All this, however, was but the figure and the prophecy of a truer divine Presence. Singular as were the Jews, the Christian Church was to be more privileged still. For the final revelation there was reserved something more than eye had seen, or ear

heard, or the heart of man conceived. God came to man in the Incarnation; He joined Himself to us in the bonds of the same nation. When the Atonement was accomplished the Spirit was to be sent. But Our Lord would not leave us orphans; He would abide forever with us, having once come to us. He would not leave us worse off than the Jews, deprived of the manifest presence of God. He has fulfilled to us in a better manner the promise given to the Jews: "I will set my tabernacle in the midst of you, and my soul shall not cast you off. I will walk among you and I will be your God, and you shall be my people." (Levit. xxvi, 11, 12.) Not in one city, but in every place from the rising to the setting of the sun, we have a temple and a tabernacle where the majesty of God dwells. Jesus Christ, the Son of God, true God of true God, is really and personally present in ten thousand churches, to be worshiped by us, to be united with us, to be our food, our strength, our refuge, our consolation, to be the glory and the life of His Church. This is the distinctive mystery of our religion. This is the permanent wall of separation between the Catholic Church and the 250 sects, or whatever it is, of the disintegrated Christianity that is called Protestantism. Enter any one of their churches. They are cold, empty, cheerless; of late years the sects, in striving for a more vigorous life, have copied from the Catholic Church, where alone real life was to be found. They have elaborated their buildings and enriched their worship. But they cannot change the real character of these buildings; still they continue to be no more than meeting places for men, they are not the house of God; they have not that warmth and homelikeness which comes only from a living presence. The desolation of these so-called churches is typified by that emblem which may at times be seen on the tables of some of them. The Cross without the figure of Him who made the Cross glorious, is an apt type of the worship without a sacrifice, of the church without the adorable Presence, of a religion without the inward life of the Spirit. Though a Catholic Church be poor and small, though even the accustomed, silent worshipers be absent, still the veiled Tabernacle and the red glimmering of the lamp witness a Presence which fills the place with warmth and life. We feel that it is a home, the home of Jesus in His sacramental life, and we can say with most solemn conviction, "How terrible is this place! This is no other but the house of God and the gate of heaven" (Gen. xxviii, 17).

The human mind, with all its imagination, can not rise to the height of these realities which God has prepared for His elect. Not only are human forms of religion without the Real Presence, but they can not rise to the conception of it. The idea of God dwelling in houses made with hands is too awful or too definite for them. They have not dared to pronounce the name Emmanuel; God is with us. Every year witnesses the birth of new religions. The founders of them have nothing to restrain them in inventing doctrines and forms of worship; they can go as far as human pride and imagination will carry them! no extravagance is so great but numbers of men are ready to swallow it, even in this enlightened age. But never in their wildest flights have religious inventors imagined themselves so great as to have God so nigh to them as our God is present to us.

We can not but be conscious of the infinite distance which separates the Catholic Church from the sects; and of the infinite superiority of the Church of the most holy Sacrament, even in the days of poverty, and smallness, and persecution, over those religions which have had the power of numbers, of wealth, and of the sword. The city on the hill, which has the Lamb for the light thereof, can look down from serene heights on all the world besides. We can afford to suffer patiently while we have God actually with us. The endurance of bigotry in all its forms is the price demanded of us for the wonderful privilege we enjoy. Whatever others may do or say against us, there is no room for angry recrimination. We can only pity them for the absence of God from their religions, and pray that they may yet one day arrive at the possession of Him in union with us.

The union of all mankind in serving the one God, and seeking the same eternal home, is our hope, and is the hope of many besides ourselves. But we and they differ widely as to the way of its accomplishment. They speak about comprehension and union on the basis of mutual concessions. Some look forward to all religions recognizing contradictory doctrines as equally true. Others talk of sinking what they call minor differences, and making compromises in belief, that is, of mixing up all truths and falsehoods, and making a compound that all will accept. In such plans the most ancient, the most powerful, the most widespread body of Christians can take no part. Between the Catholic Church and the sects there is a wide gulf which may not be so easily spanned. They stand on

one great common ground, and there is little to choose between them, for all alike are without the real presence of God-made man among them. Between the Real Presence and the real absence no compromise is possible. The Catholic Church welcomes to her fold all men who will accept her doctrines in their entirety; but she can never be so unfaithful to God as to abate one iota of the dignity and the glory which He has conferred on her by taking up His abode and setting His tabernacle in the midst of her.

III. The possession of the most holy Sacrament is not only the special distinction, it is also the life of the Catholic Church, as the presence of God was with the earlier Church of Israel.

1. Everything in the worship of the Church has reference to the one thing. The real presence of Jesus Christ is the source of all, and gives significance to all in the sacred liturgy. High Mass and Benediction, the vestments, and lights, and incense, the altars, the intricate carvings, the painted legends of the windows, the pictures on the walls, the overpowering solemnities of midnight Mass, of the services of Holy Week, of the processions of Corpus Christi—what do they all mean? This alone, that God approaches to us as to no others, that He really descends upon our altars and abides among men. Without this great central doctrine, all the pomp of religious ceremonies would be meaningless, mere empty form, histrionic show, ministering only to curiosity and vanity. We have often heard bitter criticism and ridicule of the imposing functions of the Catholic Church. They are censured as being an appeal to the lower faculties of unspiritual men, an unworthy attempt to overawe men through their material senses, and to create an artificial reverence. There would not be a word too much or too strong in these censures if our religion was as those others which do not enjoy the Real Presence. Catholics would be the first to despise the folly of gorgeous vestments, and thrilling music, and solemn actions, if they were employed only because they look nice and have a good effect. We may sometimes read of splendid functions in non-Catholic churches, imitations of our solemn benediction of the blessed Sacrament, with its outward accompaniments of lights and flowers, and banners, and vestments. We wonder what it was all about; we read on, and perhaps we find that the grand procession of ministers approached the communion table, incensed it, and retired. The mere outward husk of Catholicism! No Protestant can feel such scorn as Catholics do at pomp when it

is meaningless. In our case it is the spontaneous expression of awe at the most wonderful of mysteries. But where such pomp is an attempt to create an awful reverence when there is no doctrine that calls for it, it must result in unreality on one hand and irreverence on the other.

A few decades ago Protestants used to boast of the simplicity and severity of their churches and their worship as compared with ours. They were right, too, from their point of view. Catholics will agree with them that churches built like barns, and decorations limited to whitewash, are the fitting surroundings of a worship from which the sacred humanity is absent. Some consistent congregations have given practical results to this feeling, and they have confessedly built meeting-houses adapted to the comfort of the worshipers (if they may be called such), instead of buildings that suggest doctrines rejected by Protestants. There is no sanctuary; only a platform furnished like a study or a drawing-room. The minister comes on with umbrella, and wraps, and rubbers, lays them aside in a corner, and commences his discourse. This is as it should be; where there is no Divine Presence nothing could be more rational. If it were not for the great doctrine that God is nigh to us as to no others, we, too, should have had a simple and bald form of worship taking place in meeting-houses or synagogues; we should never have had our glorious liturgy, from which the separated sects have borrowed all that is devotional in their worship; and human talent would never have gained the inspiration which raised the incomparable cathedrals and abbeys of the Middle Ages.

2. The blessed Sacrament it is that has given the Church her indefectible vitality. She is ever so weak, so unresisting, so surrounded by implacable, unscrupulous foes, so poorly defended by her own children. It is the greatest marvel in history how the Church has lived and flourished through so many ages, how she holds so many millions of wayward men in cheerful obedience and a unity not enforced. She has not grown antiquated with the progress of the centuries, nor become unfitted for her work. If some of her members have fallen into error and corruption, she has by her own inherent strength cast them forth, and has renewed her youth, like the eagle. While all else has passed away, she alone survives, the contemporary of the pagan Roman empire, the sole survivor of long-forgotten ages. According to the law that governs

all human things, she ought long ago to have gone the way of the Jewish synagogues and the empires of antiquity. Persecutions without and scandals within, open hostility and secret treachery, the seductions of the world and the progress of irreligious times would have caused the gates of hell to prevail against her, only that she has the secret of undying life. Outsiders speculate vainly as to that secret. Sometimes they speak of her "marvelous organization," or of the tyranny that darkens the intellect and crushes freedom. The folly of such explanations! As a mere organization the Church can not compare with the War Department of an average great power, or even with a big railway. As for enslaving the intellect and the rest, such a thing is impossible, except in a limited country, isolated entirely from the world, closed against all knowledge and science, and dominated by a crushing physical force. Men in the great world of the present day are free, whatever may be said; and nothing but truth can permanently hold the intellect of millions. No; the secret of her life is that God is in the Church, invisibly to the outward eye, visibly to faith. The Church is like that mountain where the prophet lay hid; and his servant seeing the enemy surrounding it in arms, cried out that all was lost. But the prophet said, "Fear not; for there are more with us than with them. . . . And the Lord opened the eyes of the servant, and he saw; and behold the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire" (IV Kings vi, 16, 17). Jesus Christ has said to His Church: "Behold I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world" (Matt. xxviii, 20). In this lowly tabernacle is a strength greater than that of armed empires, more lasting than civilizations, more stable than the mountains, and safer than the fixed stars from the destroying power of the world. Here is the Son of God reigning in majesty, girt round by myriads of the angelic host, working indeed gently, but ruling all things mightily.

IV. The all-pervading life of the Church throbs in every member of that vast body. The real presence of the Son of God is the life of each individual as of the universal Church. Her great treasure is imparted in its entirety to everyone of us in holy Communion. Through the reception of the holy Eucharist we possess the spiritual life, and qualify ourselves for the life of glory. For Jesus has said: "Except you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you shall not have life in you" (John vi, 54).

By holy Communion we abide in Jesus and He in us, we are

united to the membership of the Church, we are joined in brotherhood with all the other members. Partaking of the same heavenly food and drink, we are filled with the same spirit of life, and we are enabled to live in a unity of faith and unity of charity, which is beyond the comprehension of the world and beyond its power to imitate.

From the same sacred source comes our constant loyal attachment to the Church, and the absolute confidence we feel in her guidance. Upon her altars Jesus Christ is lifted up daily from the earth, and by that action He draws, as He promised, all hearts to Himself. The devotedness and the unity of Catholics, which are one element of the Church's strength and life, are not the result of superstitious terror, nor of a crushing tyranny, nor of the glamour cast over their senses by the splendors of her worship, nor of brutal ignorance, nor of organization; but they arise from our faith in the actual presence of Jesus Christ with her alone, from our confidence in His promises, and from the influence of that sacred food which He has given us to eat.

The blessed Sacrament also gives us strength to restrain the wild impulses of passion, to resist the temptations that belong to our state of life, and to stand firm against the spirit of the world. However difficult the path may be, how many soever may have failed in it, the holy Sacrament is capable of leading us safely through all perils and habits of sin, and of bringing us to perfection. It is the secret of the divine virtues which so many have practised, of the glory they gave to God, of the edification given to men. The martyrs have been sustained in their torments, the teachers of the Church have been enlightened, the virgins have remained faithful to their high calling, through eating the flesh of the Son of Man. All that there is of spiritual life, of exalted virtue, is from the same source, and it is from thence that we shall receive the great gift of final perseverance.

How great is the power, how magnificent the privileges thus opened to us! Surely we are highly favored by God in that we are called to a Church which offers us such treasures! Out of the hundreds of false religions which have misled such multitudes of men, there is not one "so great that hath gods so nigh to them as our God is present to us." He is with us in our journey through the desert of this life. The most holy Sacrament is a pillar of cloud to us by day on account of the obscurity of faith; it is a pillar of fire to

us by night, helping us to see the path through the uncertainties, and errors, and unbelief of this world. May it ever go before us day and night, and may we persevere in following, till it leads us into the promised land.

## X. THE HOLY MASS—A MEANS OF GRACE

BY THE REV. G. LEE, C.S.SP.

"Offer ye my oblation and my bread, and burnt sacrifice of most sweet odor, in their due season."—Num. xxviii, 2.

*SYNOPSIS.—Holy influence of all sacrifice ordered by God; awfulness of His acceptance of our offering. Examples from Moses' time, and from Solomon's. Necessity of sacrifice in a race stained by sin; the Saviour a victim. Application of His Blood by continued sacrifice; our want of all our Masses; every grace through them.*

*I. Holy Mass put us in right relations with God, by adequately satisfying our fourfold obligation to Him: adoration, thanksgiving, satisfaction, supplication. Its ends correspond to our duties. Ends always worthily attained; duties meritoriously accomplished; then free, happy intercourse with our Creator. Confidence to do something ourselves when so much is done for us; rich in Christ and the Church, in sacrifice and altar.*

*II. Mass disposes us to receive God's blessings. Experience of changed dispositions in those who attend: improvements and transformations otherwise unaccountable. Salutary effects of nearness to Our Lord; of His example, mysteries, life. Divine virtues moving and inspiring; charity, spirit of sacrifice, aloofness from sin, very ordinary fruits of assistance at Mass; hence remedy for struggling penitents.*

*Conclusion.—Practical wisdom of taking part, as ordered, in the Lord's constant oblation; joy of it, also, and consolation. Young convert's enthusiastic piety toward the Mass. "Imitation's" summary of its effects.*

The sacrifices of the Old Law brought people very close to God. They were also marked by a great sense of the sacred solemnity of His worship. At times even miraculous intervention helped to emphasize the awfulness of having one's offerings accepted by the Creator of all things. When Moses had consecrated Aaron and his sons, and they first began to sacrifice, "behold a fire, coming forth from the Lord, devoured the holocaust, and the fat that was upon the altar: which when the multitude saw, they praised the Lord, falling on their faces" (Lev. ix, 24). When the wayfaring ark was finally brought to its resting place in Solomon's new temple, and Levite praise was resounding, "the house of God was filled with a cloud. Nor could the priests stand and minister by reason of the cloud. For the glory of the Lord had filled the house of God" (II Paral. v, 13). And there again, at the dedicatory obla-

tion, "fire came down from heaven, and consumed the holocausts and the victims: and the majesty of the Lord filled the house" (Ibid. vii, 1). Such things happened then and on similar occasions, though the victims and holocausts were mainly figurative, so great is always the action of man's sacrificing to His God.

By sacrifice, my brethren, is the human family saved. Satisfaction for the sin we had incurred, into which we had fallen, was to be made by expiation. Nothing indeed has been deeper in the religious consciousness of the race than its need of a Redeemer, of one who would buy it back at a painful ransom. This rescue from their evil plight, of His creatures to whom He had joined himself, was to give Him His name of the Saviour, of the Jesus who would save His people from their sins. That His Cross is the world's salvation, the world's only hope, is fundamental in Christian belief; for the revelation is that God so loved the world as to give His only-begotten Son—to be our victim, and that the Son spared not Himself, but endured the shame, dying that we might live. On Him the Father placed the iniquity of us all, and in His Blood are we washed from our sins.

Now, as that first sacrifice of Himself on the Cross was infinitely salutary to mankind in general, so is His continued oblation on the altar endlessly beneficial to human souls individually. Sacrifice, being of the essence of religion, has, of course, to continue; and that an infinite sacrifice should be enduring, not replaced but efficaciously renewed, is in the fitness of things or even in their very nature. Holy Mass is the continuation of Our Lord's sacrificial offerings of himself; it is the application of all His merits to the souls of us His brethren. The Church insists on the oneness of the very different offerings; her doctrine makes plain that the original real shedding of the Blood of the Lamb and its commemorative mystic shedding are identical in excellence and import. Holy fathers and other saints are positive and pointed in their statements that the moral world as much needs day by day the many Masses for its preservation as it once needed for its purification the first great offering on Calvary. They affirm that God now bears the clamor of sin because only of the voice from the altar, the voice of the Blood that speaks better than that of Abel, as of old He endured the sight of universal iniquity by looking on the face of His Christ, of the Lamb slain from the beginning of the world.

How, my brethren, mercy and grace are constantly coming to

everyone of us, in proportion to our share in the daily sacrifice of the Mass, we have now to consider; and we may group our thoughts under two heads: The holy Sacrifice puts us in right relation with God; and it disposes us to receive His blessings.

I. First, the Mass puts us in right relations with our God. You know, my brethren, that we are God's creatures, and that, though He made us very good, we have made ourselves very evil, and sinful, and miserable. As His creatures we have absolutely imperative duties toward Him, duties of great scope and weight. They are duties so prescribed by right and justice, so simply obligatory that there can be no question of His dispensing with their fulfilment. If they are not fulfilled we are not well with Him, and our condition is not only unsatisfactory but darkly perilous. Yet, left to ourselves, we would never acquit these obligations, we would never furnish anything that could be taken as an equivalent of our bounden service. Adoration worthy of God is demanded of us, and a thanksgiving proportioned to His countless most precious benefits. Impetration also we should make in accordance with our great multitudinous needs, and, still more rigorously, satisfaction to the full extent of our outrages on the divine Majesty. In all these things we fail; neither our worship nor our giving of thanks, neither our supplication nor our expiation, can be regarded as in any degree adequate. And here it is that holy Mass comes in seasonable relief, comes opportunely to supply for our deficiency. The very ends for which it is offered correspond exactly to our obligations. It makes worthy acknowledgment of God's supreme right to worship because of His sovereignty, and of His right to highest praise because of His benefactions, while it also puts up the unspeakable groanings that befit our fearful wants and perils, as well as the acceptable appeasings that turn away wrath from our ever-recurring prevarications.

That such are the ends of holy Mass and that it attains them, you, my brethren, must be fully aware. The matter is one to be recalled as often as you assist at this great act of religion. You should always say—as probably you do—that you offer the Mass for the ends for which it was instituted; and you learned in your Catechism that these ends are: to give God honor and glory, to thank Him for His benefits, to obtain forgiveness of our sins, and all other graces and blessings, through Jesus Christ Our Lord. But what I want at present to make clear to you is the fact that your share

in the fruits of the Mass can always put you individually in good standing with God, in free intercourse with Him, in the way of His abounding grace. There is no Mass said anywhere, or at any hour, in which you may not have a part—by union of intention, by mental offering, by catholicity of piety. You have a particular and determined part in the many Masses at which you actually assist, which you really join with the priest in offering; and you can have your own special part in the occasional Masses which you cause to be said for you and for your interests. All these participations in so great, so absolutely divine an action, give you a sort of footing in heaven, in the court of the King of Glory, who is thus worthily served and honored.

Now this footing of good service renders you free, even influential, in your relations with your Creator and Redeemer. You are enabled to approach with confidence to the throne of mercy. Yet in the sentiment generated there is nothing of presumption with God; there is just a sense of having sacred obligations and of being blessed in Christ Our Lord and in His Church with the means of meeting them. This humble trust is good. The effect of falling hopelessly behind our obligations is demoralizing; the effect of knowingly keeping up with them is steadily inspiring. When men see their main duties unfulfilled, they easily abandon minor ones, as though they loved the pusillanimity of letting all go because much has already been lost. But keep them fairly up to the standard of their profession, and they continue exercising their powers and profiting by their opportunities. Christians who understand how God is worshiped in their name by the ceaseless offering of the "clean oblation" of this His "bread and holocaust of most sweet odor," will more bravely persevere in His service; their confident assiduity in religious practise, especially in prayer and penance, will grow with their sense of the value of the impetration and expiation ever arising in their behalf from the altars of the Catholic Church.

You are rich, my brethren, in the holy Mass: know your wealth and use it. By Our Lord's generosity your condition is one of affluence, for truly fat is your oblation: be, then, neither sordid, nor groveling, nor unproductive. He makes your relations good with His Father; He is your perpetual peaceoffering, your "sacrifice of praise," your "sacrifice of justice"; He lives to make intercession for you. Arise, therefore, to the height of your position; maintain your wondrous privileges, and be not as if you were left,

like the heavily punished Hebrews, *sine sacrificio, sine altare,* without sacrifice, without altar.

II. That holy Mass disposes us individually to receive God's blessings is a second truth to be considered. The fact of its doing so is a matter of very common experience. Wholly different are often a soul's sentiments at Mass and after it from what they were before. The improvement is at times quite strikingly evident, no other cause than the grace of the sacrifice being at all allegeable. People go to Mass timid and tepid; they come back strong and fervent. They go with little disposition to forgive offenses, with a vague rancor of resentment that saddens and darkens their minds as well as endangering their souls; they come away lighthearted, scarcely seeing anything there is to forgive, and overflowing with good will to all their fellow-creatures. How angelic are often the shining countenances, how joyously genial the words and gestures of the outpouring Catholic congregation! Most of all is there in the secret individual hearts of the worshipers a new or an increased fixity of determination to be faithful to duty and to God. Even the ordinary Sunday Mass, the obligatory assistance at the holy Sacrifice on the Lord's Day, is commonly sufficient to keep a life in habitual direction toward heaven. At least, it is the experience of priests that men and women who never commit the sin of missing Mass are easily disposed for a good reception of the Sacraments, most easily disposed for a happy death. But it is the devotional, the frequent or daily assistance at the holy Sacrifice that makes most manifest its power of converting and sanctifying, of giving and increasing divine grace. Sinful habits are seldom able to withstand the pervadingly sacred influence of daily Mass. Temptations, even the strongest or the most insidious, lose force and malignity in the grace-laden air of the temple of sacrifice. Inspirations are more readily heard, resolutions are more courageously maintained, vocations are more heroically followed, by those whose assistance is frequent at the celebration of these divine mysteries.

Why exactly the Mass should produce in individual souls such very salutary results, you may not, my brethren, care to question, the fact that it does so being enough for you. There is, however, a utility in looking into the matter, for the more you know of this sacrifice the more you will appreciate and frequent it. First, then, the nearness to Our Lord may be taken as a great cause of grace. As in the days of His ministry, virtue still goes out from Him;

and here He is Himself, here explicitly for our healing and salvation. Moreover, His human life, with its beautifully attractive condescensions and mysteries, is brought again fresh before us. All His Incarnation, all His Passion is displayed. We are with Him at Bethlehem and Nazareth, in the desert, by the lake, up the mountainside. We are with Him in His teaching and miracles, in His labors and kindnesses. Most particularly are we with Him in the loving Last Supper and the painful way of the Cross. We hurry on to Calvary and up its steep ascent; and there we take our stand, with His mother and His faithful friends, where He, our life, is hanging before our eyes, and His Blood, the Blood of our redemption, is dropping and trickling down. What possibility is there that a believing participation in tragic sanctities of this kind should leave us unimpressed? that the witnessing of virtues so divinely human should leave us unchanged? The spirit of sacrifice passes into us, and that is the very essence of our religion. He, our Jesus, is suffering: we want to suffer too—at least we want not to refuse the small pains that come our way. He is offered to His Father's glory: why not we also? He is sacrificed for sin: shall not we be sacrificed to its avoidance, bearing everything rather than renew it, as that would be renewing His death, which was its consequence?

So the holy Mass impels us, being, as it is, the enacted charity of Christ. The lowliness of His victim condition confounds our pride; His adorable submission to the will of others, through love of His Father's will, makes us willing to obey; His tenderly consuming affection makes us soft-hearted and pure-hearted. The strong joy of sacrifice is also radiating from the altar; and so we come away in gladsome energy, ready to smile at difficulties and to shoulder our daily cross.

In this connection, it is most desirable, my brethren, that you mark a specially important disposition which almost always comes of devotion to Mass and Mass-hearing: I mean the determination to have done with mortal sin. Frequent Mass-goers are enemies of mortal sin—which is another way of saying that they are friends of God and lovers of souls. It is not that those who often assist at the holy Sacrifice may not sometimes fall: they may; yet the likelihood of such a misfortune goes on diminishing, or even quickly vanishes. And the point to be particularly noted is that sinners who really relapse have not done all they should do to persevere, till they have tried the frequent hearing of Mass. Men sometimes

say they have tried, have prayed, etc., and yet have been overcome by the old temptation. We might well ask them whether they took this convenient, easy, most efficacious way of having recourse to the altar. I am not speaking now of the Communion of the Lord's Body—the sovereign remedy—but of the simple, free assistance at the offering of that Body. To the ancient servants of God recourse to sacrifice seemed the first thought when trial and danger arose; why should the same way not occur to us whose oblation is infinitely more valuable? And, indeed, we can hardly have failed to notice how often in Christian times, in quite modern days, the great returns to God, the changes in character and life that may be called changes of the right hand of the Most High, have occurred in connection with holy Mass. By it especially are such changes rendered permanent and fruitful. So that men are still saved by sacrifice, as well in persevering conversion as in justifying redemption.

Conclude, my brethren, to be practical in your fulfilment of the Lord's order to all His people to offer His oblation in due season. The due season, according to prophecy, is at all hours, from the rising of the sun to the going down thereof in every place (Mal. i, 11); but your specially due season may be when your soul's needs are sharpest or its desires are strongest to worship its Creator. The grace you want is always welling up from the Mass as from a deep inexhaustible source. Take delight, too, in assisting intelligently at so grand a function of your religion. Newman's young convert was striking the true note both of Catholic belief and Catholic piety when he exclaimed: "To me nothing is so consoling, so piercing, so thrilling, so overcoming, as the Mass, said as it is among us. I could attend Masses forever, and not be tired. It is not a mere form of words, it is a great action, the greatest action that can be on earth. It is not the invocation merely, but, if I dare use the word, the evocation of the Eternal. He becomes present on the altar in flesh and blood, before whom angels bow and devils tremble. This is that awful event which is the scope, and is the interpretation, of every part of the solemnity" (Loss and Gain, p. 327).

Such be your sentiments, my brethren; and encourage yourselves to very frequent Mass-going by the reflection that what the "Imitation" says of the priest who celebrates is, in its measure, true of you who assist: you honor God, you rejoice the angels, you edify the Church, you help the living, you obtain rest for the dead, and you make yourselves partakers of all that is good.

# XI. HOLY COMMUNION

BY THE RIGHT REV. ALEX. MAC DONALD, D.D.

"O sacred banquet, in which Christ is received, the memory of his passion is renewed, the soul is filled with grace, and a pledge is given us of future glory."—Office of Corpus Christi, 2d Vesp.

*SYNOPSIS.—I. The word "communion" signifies fellowship. The Holy Eucharist fosters divine charity, the bond of Christian fellowship; hence spoken of as Holy Communion. Figures that foreshadowed it. Two prominent—Pasch and Manna. (a) The Jewish Pasch a sacrifice and a sacrificial meal. Figured Holy Communion as sacrificial meal. Christians made partakers of the sacrifice of the New Law. Receive in Holy Communion "the Friday's Victim." Importance of this aspect of the Eucharist. (b) Holy Communion also the manna of the soul. Christians fed with a better bread from heaven than the Israelites of old. The Pasch a yearly feast; the manna daily bread. Figurative significance of this in relation to our Pasch and our manna, which are one. Dispositions needful for Holy Communion.*

*II. Preparation for Holy Communion. (a) Remote preparation a good life—a seeking after God, the fountain of living waters. (b) Indispensable condition of a worthy Communion, freedom from mortal sin. Practise of Church makes confession of sin always part of preparation for Holy Communion. The way to make a fruitful confession; less attention to trivial sins and imperfections, more to the procuring of true sorrow for sin.*

*III. Fruits of Holy Communion. (a) A sovereign remedy against sin and its consequences. (b) The bread of the soul; keeps the life of grace in the soul, strengthens the soul, makes it grow in goodness; "has in itself all sweetness." Also fits the body for a glorious resurrection.*

*Conclusion.—Christ in the Eucharist our Leader in our pilgrimage. Foreshadowed by the pillar of the cloud. Is with us always. Is the sun of our souls to chase away darkness and make the night of our lives light as the day.*

To-day, beloved brethren, we are to consider holy Communion as a means of grace. I shall take for granted, as already known to you and firmly believed by you, that Our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ, is really present in the holy Eucharist, and that He is present by the change of bread into His Body and of wine into His Blood. I shall also take for granted the teaching of the Church regarding divine grace as the fruit of our redemption through Christ and the necessary means of salvation.

*What Holy Communion Is.*—The word "communion" signifies fellowship, or the union of many. Thus we speak of the communion of saints, which is the fellowship of all the children of

God; of all the members of God's Church, whether militant on earth, suffering in purgatory, or triumphant in heaven. The bond of this fellowship is charity, which unites the soul with God and with all of God's children. That, therefore, which serves to foster charity, to feed the flame of divine love in the soul, serves in like manner to maintain and to strengthen the bond of fellowship between the children of God. Now the holy Eucharist does this in a pre-eminent sense: it fosters charity; it gathers the children of God who are still pilgrims on this earth around a common table to share a common repast—the manna of the soul and the bread of life. Hence the holy Eucharist is known as the holy Communion. "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, ye shall not have life in you."

Let us look at the thing in the light of the figures that foreshadowed the holy Eucharist under the old dispensation. Two stand out prominently: the Pasch, or paschal lamb, that was to be eaten with unleavened bread, and the manna with which the children of Israel were fed for forty years in the desert. The Israelites ate their first Pasch in Egypt, on the eve of their departure from that land of bondage. It was the pledge of their deliverance, and the symbol of ours. They ate it in haste, staff in hand, their shoes on their feet, and their loins girded; for on that same night they were to begin their journey to the land of promise, "by the way of the wilderness by the Red Sea." When they had crossed the sea dry-shod, the waters standing like a wall on either hand, and were come into the wilderness of Sin, they had not wherewithal to sate their hunger. And the children of Israel murmured against Moses and against Aaron, and sighed for the days when they sat by the flesh-pots in the land of Egypt, and did eat bread to the full. Then the Lord promised to rain down bread from heaven for them. And in the morning, "when the dew that lay was gone up, behold, upon the face of the wilderness a small round thing, small as the hoar frost on the ground." This was the manna, the bread from heaven, the taste whereof was as that of wafers made with honey. And the children of Israel were fed upon this bread for forty years, till they came to the borders of Canaan, their promised land. "Now all these things," as the Apostle tells us, "happened to them in figure." Let us first consider their pasch as the figure of ours.

The Jewish pasch was first a sacrifice, and then a sacrificial meal —the feast upon that sacrifice. It is important to bear this in mind,

for our pasch is the antitype of theirs. The lamb that was slain in Egypt wrought salvation for the firstborn in every Hebrew home from the hand of the exterminating angel; its blood smeared on the doorposts was a sign to the angel of death that he should pass over that house and leave its inmates untouched. This figured the Eucharist in its sacrificial aspect, with which as such we have no concern now. It was as the sacrificial meal that the Jewish pasch figured holy Communion. Of old they ate the lamb with unleavened bread, and so became partakers of the sacrifice; we eat the lamb prefigured by that one, even "the Lamb of God that taketh away the sins of the world," under the form of unleavened bread, and so become partakers of the one sacrifice once offered on Calvary and prolonged forevermore in the holy Mass. "I can imagine nothing," says a devout Anglican, "that speaks to one's life's need more than the conception of being associated with the perpetual pleading of the eternal Sacrifice; it is there that the importance of the Eucharist comes in. In the Eucharist we have the assurance of the divinely appointed pledge and symbol of being identified with the eternal Sacrifice of the Lamb of God."[1] Nor have we the nude symbol only, but the reality as well. "The chalice of benediction which we bless, is it not the communion of the Blood of Christ? And the bread which we break, is it not the partaking of the Body of the Lord?" St. Augustine tells us that his mother "never for one day absented herself from the foot of the altar, whence she knew that Victim to be dispensed by which the handwriting that was against us was blotted out."[2] The word "host" is from the Latin *hostia,* and means sacrificial victim. What we receive in holy Communion is the Victim of Calvary, for the Mass is not other than the Sacrifice of Calvary, but the selfsame. This, then, is what holy Communion is in its first intention, so to say. It is the sharing in the Sacrifice of Christ our pasch; it is the most intimate union of the Christian with Christ, his Redeemer and Saviour; it is Christ's own pledge, and that pledge no other than Himself, given to the worthy communicant that the fruits of His Sacrifice are applied to him, that his sins are forgiven him. I have dwelt at some length on this aspect of holy Communion, because it is the primary one, and because we are apt to lose sight of the great truth which underlies it, that the Sacred Host offered in the Mass and

[1] Rev. C. G. Lang, in *Report of the Fulham Round Table Conference.*
[2] Conf., bk. 9, c. 13.

communicated to the faith is, as Father Ryan has expressed it in lines that every communicant should know by heart, "The Friday's Victim":

Ah! words of the olden Thursday,
Still holding creative sway!
Ye have brought us the Friday's Victim
And Priest in His own sweet way.
'Neath veils, with His glorified body,
Himself He offers this day.

But holy Communion is also the manna of the soul. As we pass through the wilderness of this world, on our way to the "lasting city," we, too, are fed with bread from heaven—a better bread than that on which the Israelites fed, by how much the reality is better than the shadow that it cast before. "Not," said Our Lord himself to the Jews, "as your fathers did eat manna in the desert, and are dead; he who eats of this bread shall live forever." By holy Communion we not only partake of the Sacrifice of Christ, unto the forgiveness of sin, but we partake of the living Bread that came down from heaven, unto life everlasting. "I am come," says Our Lord, "that they may have life, and have it more abundantly." We must often eat of this living Bread, if we would abound in the life that it gives. The children of Israel ate the pasch only once a year, but the manna was their daily bread. And God gave them the manna only after they had gone leagues into the wilderness and had left the flesh-pots of Egypt far behind. Even so the Church of God enjoins upon all her children, good and bad, to "prove" themselves, as the Apostle has it, and receive holy Communion, the Christian pasch, at least once a year. But she counts no one worthy to receive this living Bread daily, or even frequently, who has not escaped from bondage to mortal sin, who has not overcome his hankering after the flesh-pots of Egypt. We, too, must go out from the house of bondage, and learn to look upon this world as a desert place, and press forward to the things that are before, in our land of promise, if we would feed daily on the manna of the soul. But our pasch and our manna, unlike those of the Israelites, are one and the same. They are but different aspects, different ways of looking at the same divine thing. Holy Communion is a remedy against sin and against concupiscence, as well as a means of grace and life to the soul. To receive it at all one must be at least free from the guilt of mortal sin; to receive it frequently one

should be striving to free oneself from venial sin. This does not imply that the daily communicant should be in a state of perfection; by no means; for it does not imply actual freedom from venial sin. All that it implies is that one should not love, but rather hate, one's venial faults, and should be trying, however unsuccessfully, to be rid of them. "We can never," says St. Francis of Sales, "be wholly exempt from venial sins, but we can very well be free from all affection to venial sin. It is one thing to tell a lie once or twice, with full deliberation, in a matter of little moment, and another thing to take pleasure in lying, and to be addicted to that vice. Affection to venial sin is contrary to devotion," and therefore not a fitting disposition of the soul for daily Communion. And this leads us to another point.

*The Preparation for Holy Communion.*—"But let a man prove himself," says the Apostle, "and so let him eat of that bread and drink of the chalice. For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh judgment to himself, not discerning the body of the Lord." "For not as common bread and common drink do we receive these," says St. Justin, speaking of holy Communion among the early Christians; "but . . . we have been taught that the food which is blessed by the prayer of His word, and from which our flesh and blood by transmutation are nourished, is the flesh and blood of that Jesus who was made flesh."[1] Hence the need of preparation for that sacred banquet in which Christ is received. The remote preparation is a good life, a life spent in the practise of the Christian virtues. "So live daily," says St. Augustine, "that you may be worthy to receive daily." Why is it that so few come to partake frequently of this sacred banquet? Why is it that so many derive so little fruit from it? It is because they do not lead a good life; it is because they love darkness rather than the light. "Be astonished at this, O ye heavens, and ye gates thereof be very desolate, saith the Lord" of old by the mouth of His prophet. "My people have done two evils; they have forsaken me, the fountain of living waters, and have dug for themselves cisterns, broken cisterns that can hold no water." You remember the parable of the king who made the banquet, and the wretched excuses framed by those who were invited in order to cloak their unwillingness to attend it. The parable is still true to life. Men seek to slake their thirst for happiness at the broken cisterns of this world, and the

[1] 1 Apol., c. 66.

Church has to go out into the highways and byways and compel men to sit down to the banquet of the soul and to drink from the fountain of living waters.

There are many forms of devotion which may serve as a fitting preparation. I can touch only on what is essential. The one indispensable condition of a worthy Communion, on the part of the soul, is freedom from mortal sin. On the part of the body, the Church requires that those who receive should be fasting from midnight. To those, therefore, who have grievous sin on their conscience a good confession is an essential part of the preparation for holy Communion. The practise of the Church, moreover, has made confession, if not weekly, at least fortnightly or monthly, part of the preparation for all who approach the holy table. And this most wisely, for confession, though not the only means, is by far the surest and most effective means of cleansing the conscience from venial sin. And even though one should not be conscious of any venial sin, the priest is the custodian of the holy Eucharist, and it is for him to judge of the dispositions needful in those who receive it. Now confession itself needs preparation, and many seem to have a wrong idea of how they should prepare themselves for it. They employ nearly the whole time in examining their conscience —a very necessary task, it is true, but very far from being the only thing necessary. Those, indeed, who go but seldom to confession and have fallen into grievous sin, should examine their consciences carefully on the commandments of God and of the Church, the seven deadly sins, and the duties of their state in life. But those who go often, say once a month, need only run over the sins of thought, word, deed, or omission they may have been guilty of since their last confession. Nor should they waste time in searching out trivial sins or imperfections. It is far better for them to fix their attention upon their worst failing, the sin into which they are most prone to fall, and to consider well the means they should take to be rid of it. The tribunal of penance is not a counting-house where an inventory has to be made of every trifling item. With God one grain of perfect contrition weighs more than the detailed confession of innumerable little faults. The penitent should therefore seek most of all to procure true sorrow for sin. And if he is not conscious of any serious offense since his last confession, he should bring up again some sin of his past life, as well that he

may be the better able to conceive true sorrow as that he may be sure of having sufficient matter for absolution.

*The Fruits of Holy Communion.*—The other Sacraments confer grace; the holy Eucharist confers the Author of grace. It is incomparably the greatest of the Sacraments. It sums up in itself in some sort all the mercies of God to man. "He hath made a memorial of his wonderful words, being a merciful and gracious Lord; he hath given food to them that fear him." Holy Communion is, first of all, as we have seen, a sovereign remedy against sin. It heals the wounds and ugly scars left by mortal sin in the soul; it removes the guilt and stain of venial sin, provided one does not cling to venial sin; and it weakens the force of concupiscence, that strong inclination to evil left in the soul by original sin. St. Alphonsus relates that a certain nobleman had become so enslaved to a grievous sensual sin that he despaired of being able to give it up. Having communicated every day for several weeks, by the advice of his confessor, he was at last freed from that disgraceful servitude, and never after sinned against the holy virtue of purity.

Holy Communion is, in the second place, a spiritual banquet. Out of reverence for so great a Sacrament and because of the danger of desecration, it is given to-day under the form of bread only. But he who receives Communion under one kind receives a perfect Sacrament, for Christ is present whole and entire under either species. And He is the living Bread that came down from heaven, so that if a man eat of Him he shall live. "He who eateth me the same shall live by me." Bread is the staff of life, and all that ordinary bread does for the body the living Bread of the Eucharist does for the soul. Bread keeps the life in man, keeps body and soul together; the Eucharistic Bread keeps the life of his life in man, keeps the soul and God together, if I may so express it. When the soul goes out of the body, the body is dead; when God goes out of the soul, the soul is dead. In holy Communion God comes into the soul—unless, indeed, a man wittingly receives in mortal sin, in which case the mouth receives the sacred species but God does not come into the soul. Bread is the staff of life also in that it enables the young to grow, to attain their full stature. The Eucharistic bread enables not only the young but the old, those who are bent with years, to grow—to grow spiritually, to grow in goodness and in grace, for their youth is renewed, as the eagle's, to run their course and reach the measure of the years of the ful-

ness of Christ. Bread is the staff of life in that it makes a man strong. The Eucharist is the bread of the strong by excellence. It adds God's own strength to man, aye, to tender youths and maidens, so that they are able to face fearlessly the foes of their salvation, and to walk steadfastly after Christ on the royal road of the Cross—even as, in the strength of the bread baked in the ashes, the prophet walked for forty days to Horeb, the mountain of God. Lastly, bread is sweet to the hungry. So the Eucharist "hath in itself all sweetness"—*omne delectamentum in se habentem*—to those who hunger after spiritual goodness and beauty. "How lovely are thy tabernacles, O Lord of hosts; my soul longeth and fainteth for the courts of the Lord; my heart and my flesh cry out for joy unto the living God."

In the third and last place, holy Communion bears fruit not only in the soul, but in the body as well. It is the seed of immortality, the means and pledge of a glorious resurrection. "We shall all rise," says the Apostle, "but shall not all of us be changed." That change, that transformation, aye, and transfiguration, is one of the fruits of holy Communion. "He that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood hath everlasting life, and I will raise him up on the last day."

*Conclusion.*—We read in Exodus that God himself led the way for His people in the wilderness, in a pillar of a cloud by day and in a pillar of fire by night. In this we may see a figure of what has come to pass under the new dispensation. On the journey of life Christ is our Leader, and He is with us always. "Lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the world." This divine promise is literally fulfilled in the holy Sacrament of the altar. There Our Lord is ever present; here we may hold communion with Him by day and by night. "There is no other nation, be it never so great, that hath its gods so nigh unto them as our God is nigh unto us." He dwells in the very midst of us, as it is written: "My eyes and my heart shall be there always." And He calls us to himself, "Come to me, all ye who labor and are heavy laden, and I will refresh you." Let us heed this sweet invitation; let us visit Our Lord in His holy Sacrament, and visit Him often. He is the Light of the world, the Sun of our souls. When our sky is darkened, when earthly sorrows cast their shadow upon us, let us come into the presence of this Sun and the darkness will pass away. The "darkness shall not be dark unto thee, and the night shall be light as the day."

# XII. THE SACRAMENT OF PENANCE

BY THE REV. H. G. HUGHES

"As the Father hath sent me, I also send you. . . . Receive ye the Holy Ghost; whose sins you forgive, they are forgiven; and whose sins you retain, they are retained."—John xx, 21-23.

*SYNOPSIS.—Introduction.—(a) To keep in a state of grace is the most important matter in the every-day life of a Christian. In other words, at all costs we must avoid mortal sin. No more proof needed of this than two facts. (i) That those who die out of grace go to hell; (ii) death may come at any moment. Therefore only one safe way; i. e., keep in state of grace. (b) But human nature is weak; and temptation is strong; hence mortal sin is committed. Is there any way of restoration? Yes; the Sacrament of Penance.*

*I. What is the Sacrament of Penance? A tribunal—a court of justice; or rather of mercy. Its object is to pass sentence of forgiveness. Three parties to a criminal case are, (i) the accused, (ii) the witnesses, (iii) the judge. In this tribunal the accused is the penitent; the witness for and against is also the penitent; the judge is a man of like passions with ourselves. We should pray for our priests who have so heavy a burden laid upon them.*

*II. Duty of the accused. First duty to make a good confession. Two questions (a) What sins must be confessed? (b) How must they be confessed? (a) What sins? All mortal sins; the confession of these alone is of obligation. Venial sins usefully confessed because (i) this Sacrament increases grace, (ii) forgiveness is better insured, and temporal punishment satisfied for; (iii) "confessions of devotion" enable our confessor to help and warn us. (b) What kind of confession? Sorrowful and sincere. The sorrow necessary will be treated of another time. As to sincerity, it is secured by a childlike attitude toward God in this Sacrament. Sincerity involves truth, completeness, simplicity in making our confession.*

*Conclusion.—Go back to the thought with which we began; importance of the state of grace. Exhortation to those who are content to go on in state of sin. The invitation and the warning in Isaias (i, 16-20).*

If we ask, dear brethren in Jesus Christ, what is most practically important in the every-day life of a Christian—what it is that he must be resolved always and everywhere to do; with which nothing must be allowed to interfere, and from attending to which no occupation or business, no joy or sorrow, no illness or suffering, nor anything else whatever can excuse us, the reply would rightly be that this matter of every-day importance is the keeping ourselves in a state of grace—preserving within us that precious gift of divine sanctifying grace which is our passport,

and the only passport to heaven. At all costs we must keep the grace of God in our souls. In other words, there is one thing that we must avoid, and that is mortal sin; for mortal sin is the only thing that can deprive us of God's Holy Grace.

There is no need for me to prove that the preservation of grace and the avoidance of mortal sin should take the first place in our philosophy of life. It is an elementary fact. It is enough for me simply to recall that he who dies in grace is saved, and he who dies out of grace goes down to hell. Add to this another fact of daily experience, that we know not when death will come, that it may come at any moment, and we need say no more to prove the paramount importance of keeping always in a state of grace.

God indeed is merciful, infinitely merciful, and forgives the sinner again and again. But the day of reckoning is fixed, and we know not the hour nor the moment when the Son of Man cometh. Every time, therefore, that a man commits mortal sin and loses God's grace, he risks hell; it needs but the breaking of the frail thread of life, and at any instant it may break, to plunge him into the abyss. Take up a newspaper any day in the week and read the accounts of sudden deaths, by accident or by some secret mortal disease that, perhaps all unknown to the sufferer, had been undermining the foundations of his health and life, till suddenly the crash comes. These things are of frequent occurrence, and no one can say with certainty that the same will not happen to himself. Hundreds every day, like the poor Ghost in "Hamlet," are "cut off, even in the blossom of their sin . . . no reckoning made, but sent to their account with all their imperfections on their head." There is one way only of being always safe, and that is by ever keeping God's grace in our hearts.

But human nature is weak and temptation is strong. Men forget the other life when passion sways them. Then the voice of conscience is unheard, reason itself is obscured and the will is led astray, and in an evil moment mortal sin is committed, and the soul wakes up from the dream of pleasure to find itself stripped of the only thing that can make life worth living. It is a soul already judged, already condemned by its own act; a soul that belongs now to the devil, and whose home is in the dread abode of darkness and misery and torment that shall last forever. Oh, what can the soul do to escape its awful fate? Is there any way of escape at all? Can that grace which has been madly cast away be regained? There is no

time to lose, for life is wholly uncertain. Death may come—and then! What is the poor soul to do? Thank God, there is a way of escape, a way of renewal and restoration purchased by the Blood of Jesus Christ; a way by which that polluted soul can be washed in the stream of that Precious Blood and made whiter than snow. "If your sins be scarlet, they shall be made white as snow, and if they be red as crimson, they shall be made white as wool" (Isaias i, 18). And this means, dear brethren, you know it well, is the Holy Sacrament of Penance instituted by our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, and given by Him to His Church when He spoke the words of my text: "As the Father hath sent me, so send I you; . . . whose sins you shall forgive they are forgiven; and whose sins you shall retain they are retained." It is of this Sacrament that I propose to speak to you to-night. What then is the Sacrament of Penance? It is a court of justice—a tribunal, and one concerned with criminal cases. Now in a criminal court there are three parties in every case. There is the accused person, the witnesses on both sides, and the judge whose duty it is to deliver the sentence.

I said that the Sacrament of Penance is a court of justice—but, indeed, it is rather a court of mercy. Justice, strict justice, indeed, has been done for all sins; but it was done upon that Innocent One who hung upon the Cross; and it is because of the dreadful punishment borne by Him that in the sacred tribunal of Penance the sentence is always one of mercy if certain conditions are fulfilled by the accused. Yes, one object of the tribunal of Penance is to pass a sentence, not of condemnation, but of release, of acquittal, of full and free forgiveness. It is true that a sentence of condemnation *may* be pronounced; that is, the sinner may be left under the condemnation that he has already brought upon himself by his own act; for the divine commission to the Apostles and through them to their successors, was not only to loose, but to *bind;* not only to forgive, but to *retain* sins. But, thank God, the sentence of condemnation, of binding, of retaining, is rarely pronounced; and, if it be pronounced, it is the fault of the sinner; primarily the Sacrament of Penance is intended as a tribunal of reconciliation and pardon.

Who, then, are the parties concerned in this court? Who is the accused, who are witnesses, and who the judge? The accused is he who kneels there to confess his sins. The witness for him

and against him is himself. He witnesses against himself by humble self-accusation; he witnesses for himself by the evidence he gives of true sorrow for his sins, and of his firm resolve to amend his life.

And who is the judge.

Is it God Almighty—there present in His majesty? No; for He has delegated His judgment to another, and what that other decides God will ratify, unless the sinner practise deception. Is it an angel, pure and holy, sent from heaven for the purpose? No. Is it some eminent saint of God, selected by reason of long-tried holiness attested by signs and wonders? No. Who then? A man of flesh and blood like yourselves—a fellow sinner—chosen out by a divine vocation to be a minister, a dispenser of God's ineffable grace and mercy; anointed with holy unction for this end, one to whom it has been said, "Receive the Holy Ghost, whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven, and whose sins you shall retain, they are retained"; one who in pronouncing absolution is the instrument in the hands of the Almighty Judge, who conveys His divine pardon through that human instrument ordained for that merciful purpose. Yes, dear brethren, such is the judge; one who being compassed about with infirmities knoweth how to have compassion upon his brethren. How wonderful is the mercy of God, who, lest we should be afraid, has committed this office of mercy to men, of like passions with those whom they have to judge—to those who dare not, for their own sakes, and because of their own faults, treat harshly those who come to unburden their consciences to them. Dear brethren, pray for your priests who have this heavy burden laid upon them, and who must often cry out with the wise Solomon, "I am but a child, and know not how to go out or come in. And thy servant is in the midst of thy people which thou hast chosen . . . give therefore to thy servant an understanding heart, to judge thy people and discern between good and evil. For who shall be able to judge this people, thy people which is so numerous" (III Kings 3, 7-9).

The accused, then, and the witness, both for and against, in this sacred tribunal, is the sinner himself; and he has a threefold duty to perform. First he has to make the accusation. What is the accusation? It is the confession of his sins—sins of thought, and word, and deed. Let us see first what sins must be confessed; and secondly how they must be confessed. But first a word about

the Catholic practise of confession. It is one of the practises most abused by non-Catholics. They look upon it with horror. The real truth is that they can not bear the thought of the self-humiliation involved in it. And, therefore, they pretend that it has no foundation in the Holy Writ. But, dear brethren, the words of our blessed Lord that I have taken for my text are sufficient in themselves to establish the necessity of confession as an institution commanded by Christ Himself. He says to His Apostles that they are either to forgive sins or to retain them. That is, they must exercise a judgment. What will that judgment depend upon? Surely not upon the caprice of the judge. It can depend, then, only upon the state of the sinner. And through all Holy Scripture, from beginning to the end, what is laid down as the necessary condition for forgiveness? Nothing else than sorrow and purpose of amendment. And the only efficient way in which the minister of the Sacrament of Penance can judge of the state of the sinner's soul and his disposition of mind is by the sinner's own self-accusation. And to the words of my text we must add that grant of fullest and completest power over all that concerns the means of salvation given to St. Peter and his successors in the words, "To thee will I give the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven. *Whatsoever* thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven" (S. Matt. xviii, 18). But we have not only the few but pregnant words of our blessed Lord that have come down to us in the Gospels; we have also the uniform and constant practise, not only of the Catholic Church from the beginning, but also of heretics and schismatics who left the one true fold of Christ down to the time of the mis-called Reformation; who put no other interpretation upon the Divine Commission than that which the Catholic Church has always taught. It was the pride that lay at the root of Protestantism which rejected this Christian and primitive practise.

But let us return now to the question, "What sins must be confessed?"

The only sins that a person is in duty *bound* to confess are *mortal* sins. Without reference to the Sacrament of Penance, since our blessed Lord has instituted it, mortal sins can not be forgiven. I say without *reference* to the Sacrament of Penance, because, as you know, even a mortal sin can be forgiven through a perfect

act of contrition—by an act of sorrow for sin; that is, which has for its motive the love of God—but in that act of contrition must be included a firm resolution on the part of the sinner to confess that sin the next time he goes to confession and he is bound to do so. Thank God, it is the happy experience of priests that many Catholics would have no need to go to confession at all if they only went to confess those sins that they are *bound* to confess. But it is a useful, pious, and altogether praiseworthy custom for Catholics everywhere to go regularly to confession, even when they have no mortal sin upon their souls, and to accuse themselves of their venial sins.

This holy custom has always been encouraged by the Church, and that for many reasons. First, because those who confess venial sins obtain in the Sacrament an increase of sanctifying grace.

Secondly, because, though venial sins can be forgiven in other ways—as, for instance, by an act of contrition, by the devout use of the sign of the Cross, or of holy water; by the blessings and absolutions pronounced in the services of the Church; by the devout recitation of the Our Father, the Hail Mary and other prayers; by the use of what we call the sacramentals of the Church, and in other ways—yet we ensure forgiveness with greater security by means of the Sacrament of Penance, and, moreover, by virtue of the sacramental Penance, we make satisfaction more efficiently for the temporal punishment due for our sins.

The third reason for confessing venial sins is because by so doing we make known to our spiritual father the state of our souls; and he is then able to warn us of danger; to assist us in becoming more perfect; to point out the beginnings of what might develop into a dangerous disease, and to apply the remedies that are necessary for our spiritual sickness. For, dear brethren, though no amount of venial sins put together will make a mortal sin, yet venial sins, especially wilful, open-eyed or careless falling into venial sin, prepares the way for mortal sin, weakens us, and makes us liable to give way when strong temptation comes.

Let us now see *how* sins are to be confessed; what kind of confession we ought to make. A right confession, dear brethren, should have two characteristics; it should be sincere, and it should be sorrowful. The attitude of a sinner at confession should be like that of a child who, having disobeyed a loved mother, is grieved at what he has done, and in all simplicity runs to her to tell of his fault, to unburden himself and make all right with one between whom and him-

self he can not bear that there should be the slightest cloud. In this attitude sorrow and simple sincerity are combined, and he who makes his confession in that spirit will assuredly make the best of confessions. Herein, above all things, we must become as little children. Of the sorrow that we must have for sin I shall speak on another occasion, so that for the present I will explain more in detail what is involved in that sincerity which should characterize the confession of sin. Sincerity includes truth, completeness, and simplicity. The confession of sins must be true. That is, we must confess those sins that we are bound to confess, just as our conscience reveals them to us, without palliation or excuse, without any attempt to make them appear less heinous than they really are. On the other hand we must not accuse ourselves of sins that we have not committed. Some persons, from over-anxiety, will accuse themselves of things that they think they may perhaps have done. This is a bad practise. We are to confess what we know we have done. There is nothing laid down as of obligation in regard to the order in which sins are to be mentioned in confession; but it is altogether good to confess the worst first, bravely and humbly. Our confession must be complete. We may not omit any sin that is of obligation to confess; that is, any mortal sin. We must state the kind of sin, and, as well as we can remember, the number. As regard venial sins, there is no obligation to confess them at all; therefore there can be no obligation to confess the exact number. Nevertheless, in the case of habitual or wilful venial sin, it is good and useful, though not obligatory, to state whether the sin has been frequent or not. This enables the confessor better to direct the soul toward amendment. I may call your attention here to the necessity of answering truly the questions that the confessor may find it necessary to ask. If those questions have to do with mortal sin, they are asked in order to help the penitent to make an exact and accurate confession, and to reply untruthfully might easily make the confession a bad one. If they have to do with venial sin only, they are put for a useful purpose, and the confessor's power to help the soul would be hindered by failure to give a true answer. Lastly, a sincere confession will be simple. To be simple is not easy. Some lack of simplicity will not make the confession a bad one. The only thing that can make a bad confession is the wilful concealment of a known mortal sin, either by omitting all mention of it or by an untruthful answer in regard

to it when the confessor's question is intended to procure the right confession of the kind or number of the sins concerning which he finds it necessary to interrogate the penitent. But simplicity is a great thing for the soul. It means humility; it means earnestness; it means that the penitent is serious and, if I may say so, business-like about the great affair of confession. A simple confession is one in which the penitent tells straightforwardly what sins he has committed, as they appear to his conscience, and does not mix up with his confession unnecessary details or explanations, or other matters that have nothing to do with the case. And the best means of being utterly and entirely simple is to cultivate that childlike attitude of which I spoke just now, and to remember that God, who knows all, who reads the secrets of all hearts, whose piercing glance goes to the roots of our motives and the very springs of all our conscious acts, is listening Himself to the avowal that we make to His priest, who is but the representative and instrument of the Almighty Judge who hears and who forgives.

In conclusion, dear brethren, let me take you back to the thought with which I began; the thought of the paramount importance of keeping God's holy grace intact within us, and of the urgent necessity of regaining it as soon as possible if it has unfortunately been lost. How can a Christian, a believer, go on from day to day, from month to month, and even, alas, from year to year, in a state of mortal sin? Nay, how can a Catholic bear to stay one half-hour in that state of condemnation? Yet Catholics *are* content to be in that condition, sometimes, alas, for long years. They know the risk; and they know the easy remedy that is to be had for the asking. Yet they run the risk and they ignore the remedy. It must be a cause of amazement to God's angels that anyone can go to sleep at night with the damning burden of a bad conscience. How dreadful to be in hell because we would not go, no further, perhaps, than across the street, to confession. Yet that may happen, perhaps has happened, to many. On the other hand, how must that soul bless and praise God for the grace of a good confession before death who is saved, as thousands upon thousands are saved, in that way. A noted Roman confessor related how when he was sitting in his confessional, a workingman came into the church and knelt down; after a short time he entered the confessional and stated that he wished to make a

good confession, not having done so for many years. The confessor assisted him to carry out his pious intention, and the poor man went away with tears of gladness in his eyes. It was time for the mid-day meal when he arrived home; in the midst of the meal he was taken suddenly ill, and died before he could so much as leave the table. What a grace that man received! If there are any here in a state of mortal sin, let them look, on the one hand, at the unspeakable mercy of the confessional, where on such easy conditions they can have their sins washed away in the Precious Blood; and, on the other hand, let them think of the terrible risk they are running every moment of their lives. Let them listen to the loving invitation of the Father of Mercies, who calls out to them by the mouth of His holy prophet: "Wash yourselves; be clean; take away the evil of your devices from my eyes; cease to do perversely; learn to do well. If your sins be as scarlet, they shall be made as white as snow; and if they be red as crimson, they shall be white as wool. If you be willing, and will hearken unto me, you shall eat the good things of the land." If this invitation will not touch their hearts, let them not dare to neglect the added warning: "If you will not, and will provoke me, the sword —the sword of the divine vengeance—shall devour you, because the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it" (Isaias i, 16-20).

## XIII. EXAMINATION OF CONSCIENCE

BY THE REV. H. G. HUGHES

"I have acknowledged my sin to thee; and my injustice I have not concealed. I said I will confess against myself my injustice to the Lord, and thou hast forgiven the wickedness of my sin."—Ps. xxxi, 5, 6.

*SYNOPSIS.—I. Self-examination a duty taught by self-interest and following from our relation to God; for man is a "moral" being; i. e., he knows right from wrong, and sees the obligation of the moral law; and has the power to obey or not to obey. We are taught this by "conscience"; the voice of which the most hardened can not utterly silence. Instance from a modern author. Conscience also a witness to the existence of God; since it reveals a universal law; therefore a supreme lawgiver.*

*II. Examination of conscience means calling to mind transgressions of the moral law. The wonders of memory. Memory of past sins in persons in peril of death. The particular judgment perhaps similar. Examination of conscience a mercifully permitted anticipation of the particular judgment. Hence the primary object of self-examination is accusation with a view to pardon; hence its connection in the Christian religion is primarily with the Sacrament of Penance. For nature itself teaches acknowledgment of the offense as a rightful preliminary to pardon. It is the same in our relations with God. It is true (i) that this acknowledgment of sin would have no atoning value apart from Christ; and (ii) that He has supplied efficiency by His death—errors arising from the isolation of these two truths; (iii) it is nevertheless true that we are bound to make this acknowledgment.*

*III. Self-examination considered (a) as a preparation for confession; (b) as a means of advance in spirituality. (a) As a preparation for confession. The examination is obligatory for avoidance of bad confession when there are mortal sins; it is obligatory for validity of the Sacrament if there are venial sins. God does not expect impossibilities; and the rule is that examination of conscience should be conducted with the same serious care that we should give to business. Penitent should examine first as to mortal sins; then as to chief venial sins—habitual, deliberate, or dangerous. (b) As an aid to the spiritual life. First, examination for confession is itself a necessary thing for spirituality. Examination may be used also for progress, going beyond which is strictly necessary for confession; but this without scrupulosity or self-torture. It is a means of rooting out faults; especially the practise of the particular examination.*

*Conclusion.—Need of light and grace from the Holy Spirit. Necessity of using all forms of examination in a penitential spirit. Cultivate the dispositions expressed in the thirty-first (Penitential) Psalm,* 11-5, 10.

Dear brethren in Jesus Christ, I am to speak to you to-day about the practise of examination of conscience; a duty that lies upon all Christians, a practise that not only our self-interest calls for, but also our position in relation to God dictates to us. Man

is what is termed a moral being. That does not mean, unfortunately, that his actions are always in accordance with what is right; it means that by his essential nature man is subject to the moral law. For by nature man possesses intelligence and will. By his intelligence, when it is applied to things of the moral order, he is able to know the difference between right and wrong. At the same time that he recognizes intellectually the fact that one course of action is right and another course of action is wrong, this recognition comes to him with a binding force, obliging him to follow the right and to eschew the wrong. This is a dictate of reason itself; and reason, thus applied to matters of conduct, and dictating to us with an unmistakable accent of rigorous command, "this thou shalt do," "this thou shalt not do," is nothing else than what we call ordinarily "conscience." The voice of conscience is the voice of God; for it is God, the source, the author, nay the very essence of the moral law of right and wrong, who has given to man his reason whereby he can recognize good and evil, and, at the same time, the obligation of doing good and shunning evil. So strongly and deeply is this sentiment rooted in the being of man, that it is vain for us to endeavor to obliterate it. A man may blunt his conscience, may become hardened, may adopt an agnostic attitude, and look upon the moral and ethical teaching which is founded upon the universal voice of conscience as purely an invention of human philosophy; but it may safely be said that no man wholly succeeds in this; in his heart of hearts the worst and the most hardened will retain—he can not help it—that distinction between what is right and what is wrong which is founded in the very nature of things, because it is founded in God Himself. A famous writer of our day has composed a fantastic romance, in which, under the guise of strange and incredible adventures, he holds up to well-deserved irony certain dangerous teachings and tendencies of the modern world, and utters many a pregnant and ancient truth. One of his characters—a young man—is brought into close connection with a supposed dynamiter, one of those pests of humanity who seek to gain their ends by the indiscriminating slaughter of their fellows. The young man is a professed agnostic. He boasts himself a total disbeliever, not only in revealed religion, but in the data, methods, and conclusions of the whole of ethics. Yet, when it came to dynamite, he found that he had got a conscience after all. He recognized some-

thing that was indubitably wrong and horrible from the moral point of view. And in the worst of men, however they may have overlaid their consciences, the still small voice will be heard at times, bearing witness to the fact that, in spite of all their reckless disregard or sophistical theorizing, the moral law exists, supreme, binding, unassailable.

And this natural witness to law is also, by its very nature, a speaking, eloquent witness to a supreme lawgiver. For the voice of conscience imposes its dictates as evident, recognizably coming from a higher plane than that of the individual. What, indeed, would be the binding force of a law that came only from a man's self? If self were the only law, what a man willed would be always right; what displeased him always wrong. But further, conscience, natural conscience, imposes its dictates not only as from an external superior authority, but as universal in their binding force; binding all beings who, by virtue of intellect and will, are capable of knowing those dictates, and of giving or refusing obedience. In this respect, dear brethren, conscience is one of the proofs of the existence of God—the only Being that can be the source of universally binding obligations—obligations that the light of reason shows to us as to be complied with under all circumstances, not only by all rational creatures that now exist, but equally at all times, in all places, and by any rational beings that ever may or ever might come into existence. When we speak of examining our conscience, we are not precisely referring to conscience as the natural teacher of the moral law, but rather of the memory of our past conduct. For memory is an appanage of reason, and that same reason which, at the time of our act, praises or blames according as our act is right or wrong, can recall the deed of the past again with approbation or with blame. My brethren, what a mysterious, awful power is that of memory! Perhaps it is least of all our powers under the control of the will. Memories arise unbidden, or at the least suggestion that has any association with the past. There are memories we would fain blot out forever. We can not. And to a Christian the most painful of memories are those of past sin. It would seem that everything that occurs in a man's life is indelibly imprinted on the tablets of memory. Like the records in that marvelous invention which reproduces sounds of the human voice or of music, so that the very dead are made to speak again; so, under certain

conditions, at the touching of certain chords in the mysterious instrument that is called the mind, old memories that we had thought dead rise vividly before us, reproducing scenes of our past lives with almost the reality of the present. Have you not heard again and again of that phenomenon experienced by those who are in some deadly peril. They will tell you that the whole of their past life, in its minutest details, passed in a few moments before them. There is no reason to doubt this. It has been asserted so often, by so many, and just after circumstances of dread solemnity. And it is not fanciful to suppose that the particular judgment of each human soul at death will take this form. The soul will see all its past actions, will know its own state, will utter silently its own condemnation or acquittal, will be unable to withhold its assent to the dread decision of the almighty, all-seeing Judge.

Examination of conscience, dear brethren, is the mercifully permitted, the mercifully *appointed,* anticipation of the terrible scrutiny of the particular judgment. "It is appointed to every man once to die, and after that the judgment"; but also we have the words of the inspired Psalmist: "I said I will confess against myself my injustice to the Lord; and thou hast forgiven the wickedness of my sin. For this shall every one that is holy pray to thee in a seasonable time" (Ps. xxxi, 5-6).

This is the primary, principal object of the examination of conscience. To accuse ourselves, that we may be forgiven; to acknowledge humbly our fault, that we may receive pardon. If you have offended a friend, a parent, a superior, does not right reason demand that as a first step to reconciliation you admit that you have done wrong? Would not a refusal to admit this prove an entire lack of that regret which alone can justify you in expecting pardon and the renewal of good relations? It is not different in our relations with God, when we have had the grievous misfortune to offend Him? True it is that of *ourselves,* and by *ourselves,* no acknowledgment we might make would have sufficed to atone for the sin against God's infinite majesty. This is a truth. Like many another truth, by being subjected to exclusive consideration, it has given color to a pernicious error. It is in consequence of the exclusive consideration of this truth that some have taught the utter uselessness of the Catholic practise of self-examination and self-accusation. But we do not act alone in this. A full and

complete atonement for sin has been made by Him who died on the Cross. Here again is a truth that has been abused in like manner to the other. "Jesus Christ has done all," cry some, "we have nothing now to do but believe and be saved." Such forget that God has plainly laid down conditions for entering into the benefits of Redemption; and that those conditions are such as not to destroy but to fulfil the teachings of right reason and the instinctive dictates of conscience.

Under a sense of sin a man must do violence to himself not to remember his sin in the bitterness of his heart and to cry out to God, "To thee only have I sinned, and done evil in thy sight." True it is that left to ourselves we could merit no pardon; true also that Jesus Christ, the Incarnate Word of the Father, became obedient to death to win us pardon; but true also it is that the natural obligation of the acknowledgment of sin remains—not ineffectual now, but made effectual by the merits of our blessed Redeemer, and by the grace which He bought upon the Cross, and of which His Sacred Heart is the divine source.

We can see from this, dear brethren, how self-examination is chiefly connected, in the religion of Jesus Christ, with the Sacrament of Penance that He has instituted for the remission of sin. But this salutary practise has other uses in the Christian life. We will consider this practise, therefore, first as a preparation for confession, and secondly as an aid to progress in the spiritual life.

As a preparation for confession self-examination may be either strictly obligatory, that a bad confession may be avoided; or obligatory in order that a merely *useless* confession may be avoided. If a person has committed mortal sins, wilful neglect of self-examination will mean a culpable omission of sins that ought to be confessed, and will make the confession culpably invalid. At the same time it must be remembered that our most merciful God and Father does not expect impossibilities, and that when a person has seriously and earnestly done his best to remember the sins he is bound to confess, mortal sins, that is, with their number and kind, he may set his mind at rest. It is impossible for a man to see his sins in all that clearness and exactness with which God sees them. In self-examination the penitent should give to his task just that serious care and attention that he would give to any other important business of life.

As regard venial sins, it has already been pointed out to you in a previous discourse, that the confession of these is not *obligatory,* but optional; not *binding,* though highly useful. But at the same time when a person comes to the Sacrament of Penance with the intention of confessing venial sins, those sins must be examined into in order that matter for absolution may be supplied. To accuse oneself of supposititious sins, of sins that might have been committed, and to omit all definite accusation of real sins would invalidate the Sacrament. The presentment to the priest of some definite offense is necessary. As a matter of fact, it is usually more necessary to insist on time and care being spent in making sincere acts of contrition than in self-examination.

In preparing, then, for confession, the penitent should first ask himself whether he has committed any mortal sins since his last confession; he should endeavor to remember the number of those sins, if there are any such on his conscience, and to note any circumstances that might greatly increase the guilt of them or constitute a special form of sin. Thus, to take an example, if a man, in order to secure himself against habitual drunkenness, had taken a vow to abstain from intoxicating liquors, relapsed into drunkenness, he would be obliged to confess not only the sin of drunkenness, but also the circumstances of his vow, which in this case adds the guilt of a sin against religion, consisting in the breaking of a vow, to the sin of inebriety. It is not likely, unless the penitent has been for many months or for some longer period absent from confession, that he will have any difficulty in remembering any mortal sins that he may have been so unhappy as to commit. They will stand out in his memory. If he is returning, by God's grace, to the holy Sacrament of Penance after a prolonged disuse of the means of grace, he will find abundant aid in the forms of examination of conscience provided in any prayer-book.

In regard to venial sins, self-examination should be systematic. By this I mean that attention should be definitely directed to those venial sins which the penitent knows by experience to be frequent with him, to those that are fully deliberate and those that are more serious on account of their demoralizing tendency. Of this last mentioned class we may take sloth as an example. Though the sin of sloth is frequently venial, yet it has an incalculably evil effect on the soul, sapping its powers, lulling it to sleep, and

inducing an apathy and indifference to the things of God that will make the slothful man the easy prey of temptation to mortal sin.

As a means of advancing in the spiritual life, self-examination should go beyond the mere consideration of venial sin, undertaken with a view to obtaining absolution in the Sacrament of Penance. At the same time such consideration of sin, such as I have just described, is a most necessary and fundamental element in the life of all who aim at devotion. The humble examination of conscience, entered upon in the spirit of penance, and with a sincere recognition of sinfulness, is indispensable, "for all have sinned, and do need the glory of God" (Rom. iii, 23), and "if we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us," while "if we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all iniquity" (I John i, 8, 9). It would be the height of presumption for a person to persuade himself that he has nothing to do but to seek out slight imperfections. There are always past sins to remember, at least, and many venial sins, perhaps, that careful self-examination would reveal to us. Since the confession of venial sins, although most useful and beneficial, is yet not of obligation we may put away entirely all scrupulosity as to the validity of our confessions of venial sin, so long as we do confess some actual sin with true sorrow and purpose of amendment; but, if we wish to advance, we shall not be satisfied with merely securing valid absolutions, but shall endeavor to use confession as a means of real improvement; and to this end we shall with all reasonable care, though without needless anxiety or painful self-torture, seek out our venial faults with a view, first, indeed, to obtaining forgiveness, but also with a view to rooting them out. In this way self-examination becomes a means by which we continuously take stock of our spiritual state, and nerve our progress or our falling back. We are enabled, also, by using the examination of conscience in this way, to reveal our state more clearly to our spiritual guide, who will thereby be able to direct us better.

And there is one form of self-examination that is especially useful for noting our state, and for aiding progress in the Christian life; it is what we know as the "particular examen," taught and strongly recommended by that great saint, Ignatius of Loyola. It consists in selecting some particular fault that we are especially prone to, and noting each day, or better still twice in the day, at noon and at night, whether we have committed it and how often;

whether more frequently or less frequently than the day before; and in comparing one day with another, one week with another, for a certain time, during which time we strive earnestly to overcome the fault, and to practise the opposite virtue. St. Ignatius advises that the results should be marked down on paper to aid the memory. This particular examen will not take much time; and if persevered in will be of the greatest benefit to the penitent, who will thus overcome faults one by one, and make real progress in virtue.

It is needless to say to you, dear brethren, that in our weakness and ignorance, and with that extreme facility of self-deception to which we are all subject, that to carry out this important duty of the examination of conscience, whether in preparation for confession, or as a means of advancing toward perfection, we need the light of God's Holy Spirit, and His holy grace to enable us to persevere. The two objects of self-examination which I have put before you cannot indeed be wholly separated; for whoever carefully, devoutly and systematically uses self-examination with any frequency as a preparation for confession will thereby progress in the spiritual life; and, at the same time, any kind of self-examination made without those sentiments of sorrow, humility and desire for pardon with which a Christian should approach the Sacrament of Penance would be useless for any spiritual purpose at all.

Let us ever cultivate in our hearts those beautiful dispositions to which the inspired singer gives expression in that penitential psalm from which my text was taken: "Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord hath not imputed sin, and in whose spirit there is no guile. *Because I was silent*—note those words, dear brethren, *because I was silent* my bones grew old; whilst I cried out all day long. For day and night thy hand was heavy upon me; I am turned in my anguish, whilst the thorn is fastened."

Thus does the Psalmist describe the bitterness of unconfessed sin. But now listen to the remedy:

"I have acknowledged my sin to thee, and my injustice I have not concealed. I said I will confess against myself my injustice to the Lord, and thou hast forgiven the wickedness of my sin."

"Many are the scourges of the sinner, but mercy shall encompass him that hopeth in the Lord" (Ps. xxxi, 1-5 and 10).

# XIV. CONTRITION

BY THE REV. H. G. HUGHES

"A sacrifice to God is an afflicted spirit: a contrite and humble heart, O God, thou wilt not despise."—Ps. l, 19.

*SYNOPSIS.—The mere thought, seriously considered, of our relation as finite creatures to the infinite Creator will result in the sentiment of self-abasement. Some point of comparison between the creature and the Creator. Our utter dependence upon God; our nothingness in His sight.*

*II. What, then, when we consider that we are not merely nothing before Him—but sinners, rebels? What, again, when we add the thought of the supernatural graces God has given us? What disposition of heart will befit us when we recall all this? Nothing else than contrition.*

*III. But what avails contrition even when we consider the nature of mortal sin? Some description of the nature of mortal sin—rejection and contemning of God, who should be loved above all things. Sin in some sense an infinite offense.*

*IV. How shall contrition avail to atone for this? For acts that man can commit, he can not always repair. Instances—the murderer, the adulterer. So it is with the contemptuous rejection of God for creatures. No act of which we are capable by ourselves can atone for sin. Yet contrition still a duty (Psalm l).*

*V. How this contrition is made available and pleasing to God, viz., through the merits of Christ, and by His grace. Particular instance of this in the Sacrament of Penance, where "attrition" is converted into "contrition." What is "perfect contrition"? Not very difficult to acquire.*

*VI. Extension of contrition requisite (a) in regard to mortal and (b) to venial sin.*

Any serious meditation, dear brethren in Jesus Christ, upon our position as creatures, upon our relation to the Infinite Almighty Being whose mere will was sufficient to bring heaven and its vast material universe into existence; who, by the word of His mouth can create or bring to naught a million worlds, must result in a sincere sentiment of self-abasement, as we begin to realize our utter nothingness in the presence of Our God. He is All-in-All; supreme unbounded Perfection; essential Life and Energy and Power and Goodness, the only one of whom actual being is the necessary and eternal and essential attribute. For He is and exists of His own power and nature; whilst we, coming from nothing, have existence and are solely by His will and act. Should He withdraw from us for a moment the support of His conserving action, in that moment we should fall back into nothingness. Thus

are we utterly and entirely dependent upon Him for all we have and all we are. Human thought and human speech are, indeed, but weak instruments wherewith to measure and portray the abyss that, as far as the natural order goes, separate the finite creature from the Infinite Creator; but we can give some impression thereof by pious meditation; and, as I have said, the result must surely be a feeling of self-abasement in the face of the Divine Eternal Majesty and Perfection.

But when, to the thought of our nothingness in comparison with the All-Perfect One, we add the remembrance of the sad fact that we are sinners; that we have risen in rebellion against Him who made us; that, bound to His service by the very fact that we are the work of His hand, we have yet dared the mad attempt to cast off that most just obligation of love and service, what sentiment, what disposition of heart and soul can do justice to the miserable position in which we have placed ourselves?

Further, dear brethren, how shall we feel, and what shall we say—if we dare to address our offended God—when we remember how, in His great love for His creatures, He has not been content to leave us with only the privilege—the immense privilege, indeed—of being His creatures and servants, but has called us to the position of His friends, His children by the adoption of grace, brothers of His only begotten Son, heirs of the blessed vision of His unveiled glory and of an eternity of closest union with Him in the bonds of mutual love; that He has endowed our souls with supernatural graces and gifts whereby we may reach that goal impossible to our merely natural capacities? What, I ask, should be the disposition of our hearts when we recall these things and remember that in spite of all that God has done for us, we have sinned, "despising the riches of His goodness," walking unworthy of the high vocation wherewith we are called? Surely nothing else than sorrow, regret, compunction of heart, or, as we term it, contrition, can be the fitting sentiment of a sinner who has come to the knowledge of the evil that he has done against his God, his Master, his Friend! But what avails a sentiment, however strong, however sincere, however distinguished from "mere sentiment" by being deeply rooted in the will and the affections, to atone for the offense that is involved in sin? For what is mortal sin? It is the rejection of God, and His love, and His goodness for some created thing. It is thus a condemning of His Majesty, an insult

offered to His supreme excellence and goodness that we ought unalterably to love and adhere to beyond all things else. As offered to one of infinite dignity, this insult partakes in some sense of infinitude in its character, not indeed as an isolated act, but as proceeding from an evil disposition of the heart and mind. For when a man, knowing any act or thought or word to be solemnly and emphatically forbidden by the Divine Law, nevertheless chooses to commit that act or say that word or entertain that thought, his actual disposition of mind is that of turning from God to embrace some thing of earth, preferring this before God, taking a creature as the supreme spirit of his desire instead of God who made man for Himself, and offers Himself as our reward exceeding great, and, under any circumstances, is justly and reasonably to be preferred before all things whatsoever. It is this wilful turning away from God to prefer the creature before Him that constitutes the awful evil of a mortal sin; nor does it require a knowledge of the theology of sin for a man to be guilty of this evil. Knowing that God has supreme rights, knowing—and conscience is enough in most instances to tell us this—knowing, I repeat, that a thing is gravely wrong and against God's Holy Will and Law, the man who does that thing by the very fact of his doing it turns his back upon the Almighty and just Lawgiver.

What an offense? Against what Majesty committed! How shall the deepest sentiments of contrition atone for it? For while a creature can offend, a creature can not fully atone. An illustration may help to make this clear. There are some offenses against his fellows that a man may commit, yet never be able to repair. The murderer who slays the father of a family; the wretch who steals away the affections of a wife and ruins a home by his seductions—how shall they repair what they have done? By no means is a man's act always reparable. To murderers, by reason of the final irreparableness of their crime, the final irrevocable penalty of death is decreed. And though the Divine Majesty can not be lessened nor belittled by the sins of men, yet, on the side of the offender, there is the will to bring that Majesty into contempt, there is the contemptuous rejection of God's love, and an insult offered to the Almighty himself, which, by reason of his nothingness in comparison with the Infinite whom he has insulted, man alone can do nothing to make good. Yet, dear brethren, the fact that he can not repair this evil by his own power, does not

release man from the obligation of doing at least what he can; and the only thing he can do is to be sorry, truly and sincerely sorry for the offense he has committed. In other words, he must have contrition. He must cry out with the Psalmist in that truly sublime act of contrition from which my text is taken: "Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy great mercy, and according to the multitude of thy tender mercies blot out my iniquity . . . for I know my iniquity, and my sin is always before me. To thee only have I sinned, and have done evil before thee. . . . Turn away thy face from sins, and blot out all my iniquities" (Ps. 1).

But the Psalmist declares that his humble contrition will be pleasing to God; that the sinner may hope for pardon; that "a sacrifice to God is an afflicted spirit" and "a humble and contrite heart God will not despise." "Thou shalt sprinkle me with hyssop," he cries, "and I shall be cleansed: Thou shalt wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow." How shall this be when the insulted Majesty is infinite, and the sinner is a thing of naught? Brethren, the Royal Psalmist looked forward with prophetic vision to one who, despised and rejected of men, a Man of Sorrows and acquainted with grief, should take our sins upon himself, and bear stripes that we might be healed—Jesus Our Saviour, Our God. He has made atonement; He has offered to the Father an infinite price, the sacrifice of Himself; and by that sacrifice has purchased a precious elixir—the true elixir of life—Divine Grace, which gives a supernatural life to the soul, and makes our actions, done by its power, pleasing to God, efficacious for salvation, meritorious of a heavenly reward.

This is the doctrine of good works taught, dear brethren, by the Church Catholic—that our good works *are* of value, and do merit life eternal—not of themselves, but because they are joined with the all-meriting and efficacious sacrifice of the Cross, and spring from the principle of divine grace bought for us by Jesus Christ by His sacred passion and death. And this relation of our good works to the atonement and satisfaction of Christ, this dependence of the former upon the latter, is particularly brought into prominence in regard to contrition, of which I am speaking to you to-day. God's holy grace, enabling the sinner to make an act of perfect contrition, at once does away with all guilt, obtains forgiveness, and cleanses the soul, bringing back sanctifying grace

to adorn it once more. By perfect contrition we mean that sorrow for sin which arises from the love of God; sorrow, that is, of which the motive is the thought and the love of God's goodness. Now, my dear brethren, is this sorrow, this perfect contrition, a very difficult disposition to acquire? Prayers, the thought of God's goodness and fatherly love; the thought above all, of Jesus, His love, His suffering, His Sacred Heart—that furnace of ardent, true affection, will enable those who are not altogether hardened, to sorrow for sin because sin is against that God who is love itself. Nor let any be disturbed, nor think himself not to have sorrow for sin, sincere contrition, because he does not weep or feel strongly in the emotional part of his nature. Sorrow for sin is not chiefly a matter of the emotions, it is chiefly a matter of the will—a reasoned regret because we have offended God; a sincere turning of the will away from sin as a thing altogether to be abhorred and avoided; and a turning of the will back to God as the one to be loved, followed and adhered to. Actual grace, indeed, is needed to enable us to have these dispositions; but who shall dare to say that God will refuse that grace to him who humbly and earnestly asks it? But in order that we should be quite certain of having true contrition, and that it should be beyond the reach of none, not even the worst sinner, Almighty God has given to us a special Sacrament—the Sacrament of Penance—in which, by virtue of the Blood of Jesus Christ and by the graces won by that most Precious Blood, even a heart sorrow, or rather a sorrow founded on lower motives than that of love will avail to forgiveness. For in this Sacrament, as you know, dear brethren, sorrow that arises from the fear of eternal punishment, or from the thought of the deformity and disgrace of sin will avail. This kind of sorrow we call *attrition,* to distinguish it from true and perfect contrition. If, having at least this less perfect sorrow, we make a good confession, God Himself, through the Sacrament, supplies our deficiency and sheds abroad His grace within us. As sin, mortal sin, is the turning of the soul away from God, so contrition, conceivable by God's help, is the turning of the will *back* to God; as the sinful act results in a state of sin in which our wills and energies are directed to creatures instead of God, so contrition results in the state of grace in which our wills and energies are once more wholly set in the direction of God and His holy will and commandments. And in the Sacrament of Penance, when our own efforts fall short of per-

fect contrition, the Sacrament seconds them, so long as we have at least some sorrow, the sorrow known as attrition or imperfect contrition. But this fact, dear brethren, should not deter us from endeavoring to come to confession with true contrition, sorrow of sin arising from the love of God our Father. For the Sacrament will not be useless, even if contrition has already gained the forgiveness of our sins. For every time we thus receive the Sacrament of Penance, it is a source of increased sanctifying grace, carrying us forward on the road of sanctification, making our salvation more secure. We have in all this another instance of that characteristic of God's ways of dealing with us which I have alluded to before in this series of discourses. He helps us and supplies our deficiences and incapacities, but He expects us to do our part, to make some willing, conscious effort in the very making of which He aids us with His grace. Then He crowns what is truly His own gift in us by the reward of sanctifying grace, forgiveness, and charity; so that after all we must say with the Apostle, "It is not I, but Christ who liveth in me."

A word more, dear brethren, concerning sorrow for sin, in regard to the sins to which it must extend. Sorrow for sin must consciously and particularly extend to each separate mortal sin, so far as they can be recalled by careful self-examination. To be sorry for one mortal sin, and consciously without any regret for another remembered mortal sin, would deprive us of forgiveness; for one mortal sin unrepented of is sufficient to constitute the soul in the state of sin. Where the state of sin exists, God's grace can not exist; and forgiveness comes not without God's grace. God, that is, can not condone the offense and take to His bosom the sinner who clings to even one mortal sin, and whose soul is black and hideous by reason of the state of sin that he is in. So we must have sorrow for all mortal sins. And this sorrow involves the putting off of all affection and clinging to mortal sin. To put this from another point of view—we have seen how the state of mortal sin is a state in which a man's will is permanently turned away from God to creatures. Now a man can not be turned to God in respect to one thing, and turned away from Him in respect of another. That is impossible. "He that is not for me is against me," said Jesus Christ; and these words have their application here. We are either for God or against Him as regards the direction of our wills. We are either in the state of grace or out of it, there is no

medium. Hence it is that contrition, the withdrawal from sin, must extend to all mortal sins.

But it is not so with venial sin, for venial sin, though it is a going aside from the path, yet is not a complete turning the back upon God and His will. So forgiveness may be obtained even though there are some venial sins for which we are not sorry. The state of grace, in other words, can exist with venial sin. But, at the same time, the venial sins for which we are not sorry can not be forgiven. They will have to be atoned for by the sufferings of Purgatory. There is every reason, then, to endeavor to make our sorrow for sin as universal in its extent as possible, embracing not only all mortal sins—which is a necessary condition for obtaining forgiveness at all—but also all venial sins. To secure this it is not necessary that every venial sin should be definitely recalled to memory; it is sufficient that we have sorrow for all venial sins in general, and that we put away all clinging to or affection for venial sin. Thus acting, especially also by making frequent and devout use of the great Sacrament of Reconciliation, the sublime prayer of the Royal Penitent David will find its gracious fulfilment in ourselves: "Turn away thy face from my sins, and blot out all mine iniquities. Create a clean heart in me, O God, and renew a right spirit within me; cast me not away from thy face, and take not thy holy spirit from me; restore unto me the joy of thy salvation, and strengthen me with a perfect spirit" (Ps. l, 11-14).

# XV. RESOLUTION OF AMENDMENT

BY THE REV. H. G. HUGHES

"Cast away from you all your transgressions by which you have transgressed, and make to yourselves a new heart and a new spirit."—Ezech. xviii, 31.

*SYNOPSIS.—Introduction.—Necessity of contrition and penance; due to the very nature of mortal sin. Effects of mortal sin in the soul. In itself mortal sin is an irreparable evil; but God has intervened and provided a way by which the natural law of cause and effect in this case is abrogated in favor of sinners. This way is penance.*

*I. Penance as a virtue. It consists in a disposition inclining the sinner to work for the destruction of sin. It is a gift of God, efficacious even without the Sacrament.*

*II. Penance as a Sacrament. Does not supersede the virtue nor its acts.*

*III. The acts of the penitent a part of the Sacrament; as, e. g., the parts of the accused and witnesses in a trial.*

*IV. Resolution of amendment as included in any true sorrow for sin. It must cover all mortal sin whatsoever; and venial sins can not be forgiven without it. Advantage of an explicit act of good resolution. Danger of its absence in regard to venial sins.*

*V. Advantage of a strong and firm resolution.*

*Conclusion.—Exhortation and encouragement to make use of the means of reparation for sin.*

In a former discourse, dear brethren in Jesus Christ, I spoke to you on the subject of contrition, or sorrow for sin. I pointed out to you how, just as our own right instincts and natural feelings would prompt us to sincere regret for having offended anyone dear to us, as father, mother, brother, sister or friend, so, still more, natural law itself demands sorrow on the part of one who has offended God. For whatever there is of love, of goodness, of beauty, of sympathy, of faithful, tender care in those human relationships, is but a faint picture, an earthly outline of the love and goodness and care of God for us who are His creatures. And if we are bound close to those whom the tie of blood or of mutual affection unites with us in heart and mind, how closely are we bound to Him from whose hands we came forth, who breathed into us the breath of life, and gave us a being, immortal, intelligent and free! If then we have offended that God who is the sole source of all good that we possess, who Himself is all-good, all-beautiful and so

worthy of the utmost devotion of heart, what can we do but sorrow for that mad act which severed us from His love?

"Unless you do penance," declares our divine Lord, "you shall all likewise perish." Penance is the only way by which the evil of sin can be undone. For what is mortal sin? It is, of its own nature, a final irreparable act. Have you seen a noble tree, full of life and vigor, a thing of beauty in the landscape, fresh and verdant? By a sudden lightning stroke it is blasted and withered in an instant, and stands a gaunt and hideous skeleton, burned to its very core. Such is a soul that has been blasted by grievous sin. Its whole condition is changed. The sap of supernatural grace and virtue is gone.

Love, merit, satisfaction, supernatural good works—all these are simply impossible, for they are the actions of a supernatural life, and that life has departed. Not one step can a soul take of itself toward the recovery of that life. But God is good, and of infinite mercy and loving kindness; and He has provided a way by which the laws of nature themselves can be reversed in the sinner's behalf. I say the law of nature, and I use the word in relation to the Divine Nature itself, which is the source and origin of all law, whether in the realm of nature or of grace. And in the moral order it is a law that moral iniquity brings its own irreparable punishment as an effect following from a cause. The sinner cuts himself off from God, and spiritually he is dead. Only God can raise him again to spiritual life. In His great mercy God is willing to do so, and He offers again and again to the sinner the means of restoration. That restoration is by way of penance.

Now we may consider penance in two ways: either as a Christian virtue, or as a Sacrament. As a virtue it consists in a disposition of soul urging the sinner to do all that he can for the destruction and obliteration of sin in himself. This virtue is given by God. We have no claim to demand it; we can not acquire it; we can only pray for it and correspond with God's merciful action, whereby He first calls us to repentance, and then helps us in our penitential task. It is possible for the sinner, with God's grace, to repair that dreadful mischief, irreparable of itself and apart from God's special intervention, even without the actual reception of the Sacrament of Penance; though not without the desire and intention of making use of that Sacrament when opportunity shall permit. For those who know not the truth, and, like the disciples at

Ephesus who had not "so much as heard whether there be a Holy Ghost," have not so much as heard whether there be a Sacrament of Penance, the desire and intention of receiving that Sacrament are implicitly contained in willingness to do all that God commands and appoints for the separation of sin.

As a Sacrament, penance is a special supernatural means whereby sinners are enabled to perform the work of separation and the destruction of sin within them by graces poured into their souls through the superabundant merits of that precious Blood, one drop of which would have sufficed to obliterate the sin of all the world. The Sacrament, therefore, does not supersede the virtue. The sinner must still, as the very nature of things demands, himself "do penance"; exercise, that is, penitential acts, the acts that are proper to the virtue of penance. But the Sacrament makes those acts easier; conveys supernatural help by which they are more readily produced, and aiding our weakness, makes them efficacious for the regaining of spiritual life.

It is not difficult to see, dear brethren, that the personal acts of the repentant sinner are of necessary importance in the process of undoing the evil of sin. The will, which by a personal act has been turned away from God, must be turned to Him again. Though this would be impossible without grace, yet it demands a personal and willing co-operation on the part of the sinner. If a man wills not to turn back to God, grace will not effect his conversion. An unwilling turning of the will toward God is a contradiction in terms. Hence it is that in the Sacrament of Penance, the acts of the penitent, his confession, his contrition, and his willingness to make some satisfaction for sin, enter into the very constitution of the Sacrament itself. As I showed you in a former sermon in this series, the confessional is a court of justice wherein the penitent supplies the necessary parts of the accuser and witness, in addition to being the guilty person. It is, then, of the highest importance that the sinner should well understand the nature of the acts which he must perform, and that he should perform them well.

If we consider the nature of real sorrow for sin, it will not be difficult to see that if it *is* real, it must include the fixed resolution to avoid all mortal sin for the future. Moreover, if we wish to obtain forgiveness for venial sins also by means of this Sacrament, we must resolve to avoid those venial sins of which we accuse ourselves.

Our resolution must cover all mortal sin whatsoever: for mortal sin means absolute enmity to God; to will a mortal sin in the future is itself a mortal sin, excluding grace from the soul. As to venial sin, the absence of a resolve to avoid one or more venial sins, though constituting a certain unworthiness, does not involve enmity to God, nor exclude sanctifying grace from the soul; nevertheless a venial sin which we do not resolve to avoid we are certainly not sorry for, and, therefore, it can not be pardoned; since there is no pardon without sorrow for past offenses. To regret an act sincerely and to mean to repeat it is again a contradiction in terms. It is very clear then, that, as a general principle, true, real sorrow for sin must include the purpose of amendment.

It may be asked here: Supposing I forget to make an explicit, definite resolution of amendment, is my confession therefore invalid? The reply is, No, certainly not. If your sorrow is true, it must and it does, by that very fact, include a purpose not to sin again. Supposing a man to have taken an imprudent step in business. He says, "I deeply regret that I took that step." He may add, and it would be very natural for him to add, "I will never do it again." But even if he does not add this in words, it is certainly in his thoughts. The knowledge that he made an error, and his regret for that error, involve the determination to avoid that error in like circumstances in the future. But though this is so, it is altogether more prudent and better for the penitent to make a hearty and explicit resolution of amendment: "I resolve, by God's grace, never to sin again; and carefully to avoid the occasions of sin." This act reminds us of the necessity of such a resolution entering into our dispositions; it insures that we take pains to make our sorrow real. It suggests to the soul the question, "Do I mean this, whether I *say* it or no? If I do not mean it, my sorrow is not real."

I would say a word here as to sorrow and resolution of amendment in the case of those who happily have only venial sins to confess. God be thanked that there are many who, week after week, or month after month, have no mortal sin to accuse themselves of. But there is a danger that, through routine, they may forget the necessity of real regret, and real purpose of amendment for the validity of the Sacrament of Penance; since, as I have pointed out, these acts of the penitent constitute a part of the Sacrament itself. Venial sin does not cause that shock to the soul which mortal sin does. Unless the sinner be hardened, or an habitual backslider, he

will scarcely be perfunctory in the confession of mortal sins. But it is easy to be perfunctory in confessing venial sins. Every priest knows penitents who do nothing very wrong; who come to confession always with the same list of slight offenses. A priest has, indeed, no right to judge from the matter-of-fact way in which sins are detailed, that there is no real sorrow and purpose of amendment; for a "business-like" way of confessing—if I may use the term of a sacred thing—is often a sign of real downright earnestness and careful preparation. But the confessor may judge from entire absence, I will not say of actual improvement, but of any *effort* to improve, that there is a want of any real sorrow. If that sorrow is wanting, no pardon can be received. To avoid this danger, those who are conscious of venial sins only, should select three or four of their most habitual venial sins, especially the more serious and wilful of them, and make sure of sorrow and real purpose of amendment in their regard, determining with God's help to root them out altogether.

You can hardly fail to see, my dear brethren, the great advantage and utility of a firm and strong resolution, whether mortal or venial sin be in question. Even in the order of nature, a strong determination to accomplish any task is half the battle, and a great augury of success. The strong will-effort is an impulse of which the momentum will last the longer as its initial force is greater. The same is true of the resolution of amendment in confession, and all the more true as there is added to our natural power of determination the force of supernatural grace. In preparing, then, for this saving Sacrament, let there be no half measures in resolving to fly from sin and to be ever faithful to God. If we have fallen into that grievous and awful state of enmity to Him which mortal sin involves; if we have thus insulted our dearest and best friend, our most loving Father, our good God who promises nothing less than Himself as our eternal reward, let us make the only reparation that we can, by a firm determination to be faithful to Him for the future, and to the very end of our lives, and the more we have offended Him, the more fervent let us be in loving Him and serving Him in the future. We need not fear repulse, for He is all-merciful.

It is Jesus our Saviour to whom we come in confession. Shall we fear repulse from Him on account of our sins? We might fear repulse if Jesus had come to reward the just. But He came—He tells us so Himself—not for the just, but for poor sinners. Let us

come, then, with confidence to the throne of grace, that throne of mercy and reconciliation which He has set up in His Holy Catholic Church. There we shall obtain pardon, cleansing grace and strength; and all that He asks us to do is to be sorry for our past offenses, and to resolve to avoid sin in the time to come.

One word more for the consolation of timid souls. Some may think that if they fall again into sin, it is a sure and certain sign that they had no sorrow in their past confessions.

Brethren, it is no sign at all. I would ask you this: Did you *try* at all; did you pray at all against temptation? If you simply abandoned yourself without an effort to your former sins, that would be a bad sign; but if you made some effort, if you prayed and took means to avoid sin, then the fact that you have succumbed to temptation again does not prove that your confession was not good or that true sorrow was wanting. No; you must not be discouraged if you do not meet with entire success all at once. If you have failed, go again to the source of pardon and grace. If necessary go again and again. Do your utmost to make good use of the Sacrament of Penance, renew still more bravely and strongly your purpose of amendment; and, though the struggle may be hard and long, yet the victory will most assuredly be yours in the end.

"Cast away," said the prophet, "cast away from you the transgressions by which you have transgressed; and make to yourselves a new heart and a new spirit." "Cast away your transgressions" by a fervent will to commit them no more; make to yourselves a new heart and a new spirit—the mind which was in Christ Jesus—by a sincere detestation of that awful evil which separated you from God. Do this, as your part, and your efforts will be seconded, as indeed they are begun, by God's merciful grace, who would not that any sinner should perish, but that all should find pardon and peace and grace to persevere.

# XVI. PENANCE.

BY THE RIGHT REV. JOHN S. VAUGHAN, D.D.

"And when Jesus had fasted forty days and forty nights afterwards he was hungry."—Matt. iv, 2.

*SYNOPSIS—Man was created pure and holy and needed not penance. Rebellion of sin changed the harmony of God's plan. Hence man's life is now a warfare. Consider the accumulation of sin in a lifetime. Sin means punishment. How little we do to diminish our measure of punishment. It may be diminished by voluntary penance. Penance then atones for sin and imparts strength to the soul, and thus save from sin in the moment of temptation. Sin is our only enemy. It is born of self-indulgence. Penance is self-oppression, self-conquest. Temptation always our lot; penance our weapon against it. Compare our method of action with that of the soldier, swordsman, runner, swimmer, etc.; all these prepare for the contest by self-denial, yet they obtain only an earthly prize, we an eternal crown. Compare two men in the same temptation; one falls because he had not formed the habit of self-denial; the other conquers because he had acquired this saving habit. The Church urges and compels us to penance during Lent, setting before us the example of Christ, who, sinless Himself, yet fasted for forty days.*

Penance, let us bear in mind, formed no part of God's original plan. It is one of the consequences of sin; a penalty we have brought upon ourselves. God destined man for happiness. His will was that man should live in a state of sweet content, unoppressed by pain and sorrow. God created him innocent and joyous; surrounded him with all that could administer to his wants and promote his well-being. And, had man only remained faithful and obedient he would have known nothing of anguish, or shame. Quite the contrary! His life would have been one of unclouded pleasure and delight in this world, only to be succeeded by a state of eternal pleasure and delight in the next.

But, alas, "man, when he was in honor, did not understand," as King David reminds us in Psalm xlviii. No! He failed to realize his privileges, and, so far from following his conscience and submitting to the commands of God, he chose to listen to the deceiver, and, at his instigation, rebelled against his Sovereign and spurned his supreme Lord and Master.

The deadly poison of mortal sin, once introduced into the system, began to produce its natural effects. It caused disorder both within

and without. The soul and the body, instead of living and acting in unison, became, as it were, torn asunder by conflicting interests. Each struggled for the mastery. Originally the body, together with all its senses and its appetites, was in complete subjection to the soul, so that the whole person was at peace. There was harmony because the soul ruled. This harmony no longer obtains. Now the body is ever striving to gain the upper hand, and to usurp the authority of the soul. It seeks sensual indulgences, it strives after worldly perishable goods, it demands all kinds of corporal satisfactions. The soul is obliged to struggle and fight for its life, and to put forth all its strength so as not to be dragged down into the mire and filth of sin. "Man's life upon earth is a warfare," as the Holy Spirit reminds us. And experience proves that the battle is a hard and a stubborn one, and that in many ways we are always failing and yielding. Scarcely a day goes by but we give way, in some measure, to the solicitations of our corrupt nature. Indeed, all our natural tendencies are toward sloth, toward neglect of duty, toward neglect of prayer, and toward love of the world, rather than toward love of God.

It will be well for us to consider the years of our life that have already rolled by, and the manner in which we have misused and misspent them. How seldom we have acted perfectly, how often imperfectly; how seldom our intentions have been really upright and disinterested, how often they have been tainted and unworthy, And, as for our daily negligences, omissions, and injustices, who shall reckon them?

Yet observe, just as day is added to day, so offense is added to offense, until they surpass all calculation. And each slight offense, however slight; and each venial fault, however venial, calls for its own separate and definite punishment. How terrifying to contemplate this ever-growing list of sins, with its corresponding growing list of punishments. As some foolish spendthrift is at last oppressed by his ever-increasing weight of debt, so are we courting a similar fate by our negligence and indiscretion. Sins accumulate. Punishment accumulates. Yet we pay no heed.

The fact is, time hurries us on, so that our childhood, our boyhood, and our adolescence are soon lost to mind, and we rest in sweet oblivion of the sins that have stained and besmirched our souls during those forgotten years. Nevertheless they are all, without exception, noted down by the recording angel, and will, one

day, be brought up against us. Yes, the whole history of our life, with all its selfishness, its infidelities, its shortcomings, its disorderly acts, and its reprehensible thoughts, and perverse and unruly desires, is written down, we might even say, *engraved* on the mind of God, so that, when we are summoned to the judgment, there may be laid upon us the punishment of ten thousand sins.

The *guilt* of these sins, if we have been truly contrite, will have been forgiven us, but, unless we shall have already satisfied for them, the punishment remains. Yes! Even though heaven be our ultimate home and dwelling, yet we shall not actually enter into possession of its joys and privileges till we have fully satisfied the claims of God's justice, and atoned for every sin. We shall be kept in bondage till we have wiped out every fraction of our debt. "Amen, amen, I say to thee, thou shall not go out from hence till thou hast paid the last farthing."

The canonized saints seemed, to the eyes of men, to be without sin. Yet before God even they were not pure. We may, indeed, call them holy and just, but the Scripture reminds us that even "a just man shall fall seven times" (Proverbs xxiv, 16). But if even the saints often fell, their falls were not only far less serious than ours, but they were continually settling their accounts, and wiping out their debts, by their constant mortifications and severe penances. With them *every* day was a day of self denial. But we? What are we doing? What efforts are we making to cancel our debts and to satisfy God's anger; we, whose sins are so much more numerous and so much more serious and deliberate than the slight faults and frailties of the great servants of God?

Alas! We do little if anything, and scarcely seem to realize the gravity of the situation. It is for this very reason that the Church, at various seasons, calls to our minds a duty which we are all too willing to forget, and urges us to bow our heads in prayer, and to mortify our bodies by fasts and abstinence.

The law of penance is a divine law, and none can escape it. Since all are included under sin, so all are included under the law of penance. There are, no doubt, some too delicate or too sick to undertake the precise form of penance enjoined by the Church. These may, of course, apply for a dispensation. But even when this has been granted, it in no way releases them from the general obligation, which rests upon every sinner, of doing penance for his offenses.

*Should any man wish to exempt himself from all penance, let him first prove himself exempt from all sin.* When such a blameless soul, such an astounding saint arises in our midst, it will be time enough to consider his case. As to ourselves, we have learned little of Catholic truth if we do not yet know that we must take up the Cross if we are to be true followers of the Crucified. "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow me" (Matt. xvi, 24).

What, it may be asked, is the use of penance? What purpose does it serve? My reply is, that penance atones for sin (through the merits of Jesus Christ), and appeases God's anger. It would suffice, even if this were all. But it does yet more. It imparts a strength and vigor to the soul, which goes far to endure its victory over its enemies. It braces up the entire man and instils habits of virtue, which are of incalculable service in our contests with the devil, the world and the flesh.

However, these are mere statements. We shall perhaps better realize their truth if we first consider carefully what sin really is, and then the security that a mortified life affords us against its assaults.

Sin! Sin, my dear brethren, is the only enemy we really have to fear. To convince ourselves of that, all we need do is to ask ourselves the following questions: What is that which alone can blast our whole career? Rob us of God? Deprive us of heaven? And fling us headlong into the bottomless pit? What is it that alone has the power to chain us down, amid the quenchless flames of hell, forever and ever, as long as God is God? There is literally but one thing, and that is sin. Yes. No other enemy can work us such evil. Sin, and only sin, possesses this awful power. Sin can do it. Sin has done it. Sin is doing it every day. Sin, in short, is the very root and source of all our misery, and of all our misfortune.

But what is sin? What is its nature? From what hellish soil does it spring? Of what diabolical parent is sin born? Ah! It springs from the spirit of self-love. It is born of self-indulgence, It can flourish in no other soil. And what is its connection with penance? Well! it is the exact contrary. It is its antagonist, its most inveterate enemy. One is, in short, the antipodes of the other.

What does an act of sin turn out to be, when we come to analyze it? An act of sin is an act of self-indulgence. And what is an act of

penance? An act of penance is an act, not of self-indulgence, but precisely the contrary, viz., an act of self-oppression, an act of self-conquest. When a man sins, he allows inclinations to conquer him. When he does penance, he conquers inclination. When we sin our enemy throws us under his feet, and, placing his heel upon our head, crushes us. When, on the contrary, we do penance, it is we who throw our enemy under our feet, and instead of his placing his heel upon us, we place our heel upon him and crush him, leaving him utterly vanquished.

Hence, to practise penance, to cultivate the virtue of mortification, is to dispose ourselves in the most direct way for continual victories. We can not help being tempted. No. Temptation is a necessary condition of our present state. But we can and ought to prevent ourselves being overcome, and to take the means of always scoring a success. Now, if we possess the penitential spirit, and lead lives of mortification, and acquire a well founded habit of self-denial, then our victory is assured.

We fall, often grievously, because we will not dispose ourselves for the conflict by accustoming ourselves to self-denial in lawful things. In this respect how far wiser are the children of this world than the children of light. A soldier of an earthly king does not expose himself to the enemy, in the open field, until after he has been carefully drilled and exercised. An athlete will not enter the lists, nor pit his strength against another, until after he has acquired strength and dexterity by previous practise. In fact, no man, be he a wrestler, or a boxer or swordsman, or a runner or swimmer, attempts to exhibit his prowess in a public contest, save after an extended period of preparation. He is quite well aware that he can never hope to succeed, or to carry off the prize, without previous exercise and regular training.

And, dearly beloved brethren, if this be deemed essential in ordinary encounters, where nothing of serious importance is at stake, how immeasurably more important it must be where the consequences of success or failure are so momentous and far reaching. For the sake of a very dubious gain worldlings deny themselves and put themselves to endless trouble and pain, while we can hardly be induced to do anything that involves suffering or inconvenience, even to secure eternal life, and the inheritance of the saints. Yet, to our shame be it said, they are contending only for an earthly crown, while we for a heavenly and everlasting one.

Compare two men of similar age and position, but differing in their spiritual training, and mark how differently each is affected by temptation. The one, let us suppose, has always followed his inclination and indulged his own sweet will. His one ruling idea has always been to amuse and enjoy himself. He has, in short, gone on the plan of gratifying himself to the full, in all that is not sin. Suddenly, when he least anticipates anything of the kind, he is brought face to face with some severe temptation. The devil invites him to enjoy some forbidden pleasure, and sets his whole heart ablaze with the fire of some sinful passion. The unhappy man knows it is contrary to the law of God. He is conscious that heaven and hell are quivering in the balance. True. But he has no experience in the art of self-denial. He has never refused himself anything. On the other hand, the pleasure is so attractive; the opportunity close at hand; and having had no previous practise in the art of wrestling with an adversary, how can he begin now? "Habit," it has been said, "is a second nature"; strong, imperious, and almost irresistible. He has, indeed, formed a habit, but it is a bad habit; yes, a habit of self-indulgence. How is he to break through it at this moment? How escape from its iron thraldom? Such is his plight. Not only is the devil fighting against him, and the world and the flesh, but what is worst of all, his own nature has conspired with these enemies to encompass his ruin—that nature which has been trained for years to yield to the solicitations of pleasure on every occasion, and never to forego any opportunity of self-indulgence. Oh, who will describe the dangers of such a position? What hopes are there of his ultimate victory? Alas! We can discover but the faintest.

Very different is the position of the man who has passed through the school of voluntary suffering, and who has diligently studied the art of self-conquest. Yea, who, by the grace of God, has perhaps never let a day go by without performing some act of abnegation. Such a one is armed and ready for the fray. He has his inclinations well under control. He has denied and thwarted them so often in lawful things, that he feels no difficulty now in denying and thwarting them in things that are unlawful and pernicious. If his passions are not actually dead they are tamed, and as subject to his direction as a horse that has felt the curb, and has been thoroughly broken in. Pleasures may be set before him in the most seductive forms. Everything may seem to invite him to indulge

his wish, but fortunately he is no novice in the art of self-denial. He has acquired such a mastery, that the storm has passed but does him no harm. While others sink, like weak reeds, before its blast, he, like some mighty rock, weathers the fiercest tempest, draws good out of evil, and even wins an everlasting crown. Hence the poet sings:

> Sow an act, reap a habit;
> Sow a habit, reap a character;
> Sow a character, reap a destiny.

But even admitting the need of penance, why, it may be asked, does the Church set aside the forty days of Lent especially for the purpose?

The reason, dear brethren, is not far to seek. The Church well knows our weakness and sluggishness in the service of God, and how unwilling we are at all times to forego any pleasure, or to put ourselves out in the smallest way. She is perfectly well aware that, if left to ourselves, we would be always postponing the evil day, and that few, if any of us, would undertake any penance whatsoever. We would be forever discovering or inventing some excuse for dispensing ourselves. Life would go by and nothing would be done. To meet this difficulty she selects forty days of Lent, during which she commands us to consider more seriously than at other times the needs of our soul, and to do penance for our sins. The number forty is selected, rather than any other, because Jesus Christ, our divine model and example, chose to fast for that number of the days and nights in the desert before beginning His public life. And as He, the infinite holy, had no faults of His own to expiate, nor any need of learning the art of self-conquest, His chief motive was clearly to leave us an example, that we might follow in His footsteps.

## XVII. ON CONFESSION

BY THE REV. C. P. BRUEHL, D.D.

"He that hideth his sins, shall not prosper; but he that shall confess and forsake them, shall obtain mercy."—Prov. xxviii, 13.

*SYNOPSIS.—Holy confession misunderstood and calumniated by the enemies of the Church. Its beneficent influence upon the human heart; it uproots vice, promotes virtue and gives peace.*

*I. The nature of confession. Principal part of the Sacrament of Penance. Profound significance as sign of contrition and beginning of atonement. It must be complete, sincere and contrite. There will be a revision of our confessions at the last judgment. He who is dishonest in confession deceives himself. The confusion incident on confession very wholesome.*

*II. General confession necessary if previous confessions have been bad. In many cases it is useful; when entering a new state of life; to efface some particularly heinous sin.*

*III. The role of the confessor. He not only absolves the penitent, but guides and cheers him. Very important to have a regular confessor. He will prove a Raphael and a guide to heaven.*

*Catholics thankful for the institution of holy confession. It is for sick and healthy a source of peace and consolation.*

My friends, perhaps no institution of our holy Church has been so much maligned as confession. It is not against the doctrine of the remission of sins in general, nor against the Sacrament of Penance as a whole, that the attacks of the enemies are directed; but against the condition, to which this forgiveness is attached, and against the essential part of this Sacrament, to wit, the revelation of our sins. The obligation of confessing our sins is decried as violence done to our souls and as the worst form of tyranny, not even respecting the inmost sanctuary of our conscience. We are not surprised at this animosity of the adversaries of the Church against a practise that has been so efficacious in the sanctification of the people, and that is so relentless against every vice, however secret and covered by outward respectability. The Council of Trent points out the source of the infuriated assaults and the vile slanders against holy Confession. It tells us: "To Confession is, in a great measure, to be ascribed whatever of holiness, piety and religion has been preserved in the Church in our times through the boundless beneficence of God, so that to no one ought it be matter of surprise that the enemy of the human race, in his efforts to overthrow to its foundations the Catholic faith, should, through the agency of the

ministers and satellites of his impiety, have endeavored to assail with all his might this citadel as it were, of Christian virtue." If there is greater purity in Catholic homes, greater delicacy of conscience, greater loyalty of duty and a keener sense of responsibility among Catholic men and women, it is due to the salutary influence of the confessional. And, I dare say, if the Catholic heart is more cheerful and blithesome, if the Catholic religion is less gloomy and somber, if those qualms of conscience, stinging as the poisonous fangs of a serpent and driving men to despair and self-destruction, are unknown to the practical Catholic, it is owing to the wonderful power of confession.

Where is the Catholic that has not sometime of his life experienced the comfort of heart that comes from confession; that has not thanked God some time most fervently for this great blessing? If so, it was at that period of life when he had dreaded it most and kept shy of it most studiously for many days; when he had almost begun to hate it, as the enemies of the Church; when it had nearly become for him a stumbling block and a scandal. A darker hour had led him into a more disgraceful deed; he felt the whole shamefulness of his guilt; he was sick at the thought of manifesting his secret shame to man; why, he could not have whispered it to himself aloud. So he detested this institution that compelled him to divulge the sad secret of his shame and frailty to a fellowman. But he found not peace; remorse tugged violently at his heart; the shadow of his sin was always with him. With great repugnance he approached the sacred tribunal; in an agony of confusion he confessed his foul deed. And forthwith peace was restored to his tortured mind; the terrible burden was taken from his heart; the memory of his sin lost its galling bitterness. Thus he blessed this holy institution, which he had dreaded so much.

It is true this sacred tribunal has its terrors, but only for those that do not approach it; for those that enter into its silent shade, it radiates peace and calm and comfort.

We will try to understand this great influence and efficacy of confession, and therefore consider:

*Its nature and qualities;*
*The utility of general confession; and,*
*The role of the confessor.*

*I.* Confession is the most striking part of the Sacrament of

Penance. It holds such bold relief and overshadows the others to such an extent that it stands for the whole Sacrament. And not without a profound reason. It is the pith and bone of the Sacrament, and without it the matter of the Sacrament of Penance would be too elusive and ethereal, a confession is something that appeals to our senses; an inward sorrow is a thing of the heart and can not constitute the matter for a Sacrament. The confession, that is, the self-accusation of the sinner, is an essential, indispensable part of the Sacrament of Penance; because there can be no tribunal, no judgment without a knowledge of the case; but in this particular instance the necessary information for the spiritual judge can only come from the lips of the sinner himself, for he is the only witness of a deed which may have been perpetrated in the darkest hour of night, away from the mansions of men; nay, which may have been only a thought, a wicked desire, that lurked in the remotest depths of the soul.

And behold the divine insight into human nature of Our Lord when He made this self-accusation of the sinner the condition of forgiveness! It is the surest sign of contrition and the first step toward conversion. He who accuses himself of an action shows his detestation for it; he punishes himself for it by the confusion which the avowal causes. Moreover, by this confession he declares the deed to be his no longer; he cherishes it no more in his heart, and regards it as a thing to be condemned and that he would wish to disown. So the confession manifests a thorough change of heart. That is the meaning of confession; it is an outward protestation that we have severed all internal connection with our sins, that we no longer suffer them in our hearts and minds and souls.

From this the qualities of a good confession may be easily gleaned. A good confession must be complete, sincere and contrite.

It must be complete. We must reveal all the mortal sins of which we are conscious. We must state the number as exactly as we remember. If we conceal a sin, that means that we retain it in our bosom; that we still cling to it; that we do not acknowledge its wickedness, and that we continue to love it. If we do not take pains to discover the number of our sins, it shows that we do not realize the full weight of each individual transgression and that we make light of offending God. Also must we add such grave circumstances that change the nature of the sin. Let us not forget that the accusation we make against ourselves in the confessional, will one

day, at the last judgment, have to undergo a thorough revision, and then any lack of accuracy and any negligence will terribly tell against us. To our dismay and overwhelming confusion all those sins which have been suppressed in confession will be formidably arrayed before us by the omniscient Judge. Even the most hidden faults we must reveal. God's burning eye is resting upon us when we kneel before the confessor. To deceive the confessor would be to deceive yourself. For you can only be absolved of those sins which you confess, and since one mortal sin can not be forgiven without all others likewise being remitted, your sins remain when you wilfully conceal any one. You come forth from the confessional worse, more criminal than you entered. When not complete, confession does not give peace, but it begets remorse and anxiety. The sin hidden is as a thorn in the quick. Yet confession is not meant to be a torture. We need not rack our memory to obtain the exact number and all details; if we proceed with due seriousness, as becomes such an important matter, we may rest assured, even if one or the other sin should slip from our recollection, they are included in our confession and remitted; but we must disclose them in our next confession, if since remembered.

Ah, but it is difficult to expose all one's failings; to dig up those things, the very memory of which makes us blush; to speak of our disloyalty, our cowardice, our ungratefulness, our fickleness.

We do not deny this. But does not sin deserve some punishment? Well, the confusion incident to confession is the penalty of our trespasses and the beginning of atonement. And, after all, has the sinner a right to be proud; has he any claim to the reputation of a saint? And if he did not blush to commit sin, to stoop to gratify his very lowest passions, why should his delicacy be now spared in confession?

Our confession must be sincere. Let us put things as God sees them. Do not veil your sins, do not color or palliate them. We did not come to defend ourselves. How could we dare to contend with God? But will not the priest despise and loathe us? No, my dear friend, he knows human frailty and the fascination of sin. No, he will not look down on his fallen brother.

However, we should not use blunt and coarse expressions that savor of the street and figure in the conversation of lewd men. Especially in matters of the Sixth Commandment, a hint, a suggestion is enough. Do not offend the ear and the modesty of your

confessor. Nor should you exaggerate your sins, they are bad enough as they are. Exaggeration in the number or quality of your sins may lead to serious errors in the direction of your conscience. He who lightly overstates the number of his sins proves that he little understands the enormity of even one single offense of God. Truth, moderation, modest reserve and soberness of expression should guard our lips when we confess our sins.

And, lastly, our confession must be contrite. We are prostrate before the priest who is our judge. The consciousness of our guilt should weigh on our souls. We are criminals. We did not come to justify ourselves, but to accuse ourselves of our wrongdoing and to implore pardon. Confession is not a mere report of indifferent happenings; not a narration of things that do not affect us and our feelings. It must be a real self-accusation inspired by humility and contrition; it should vibrate with subdued emotion; it should have the ring of vehement indignation in it; it should be broken by suppressed sighs and heavy with the unshed tears of the heart. We should confess our sins with a deep sense of shame, and experience the full bitterness of our disgrace. The tide of shame must rush to our cheeks, and our brow must be bent in utter confusion. Ah! well is it, when a man comes out of the confessional his cheeks aflame and his eyes cast down. Those glowing spots are the roses of spiritual health, the signs of conversion. But if we confess our sins without shame, we will again commit them. In confession the blunted feeling of modesty must again be restored to its former keenness and delicacy. Fear not, my brethren, when you are ashamed to confess your sin, for now you see its ugliness and you will yield to temptation no more. Overcome this false shame that would seal your lips; confess that disgraceful deed against yourself: and then ever remember this moment, this terrible struggle, this agony of shame, bitter as the agony of death; remember it when seduction would entice you to do or allow some dishonorable action that will make confession to you a torment and agony. Thus the thought of confession will be to you a powerful antidote against sin, even as the thought of death and of the last judgment.

II. A general confession extends over a longer period of time, and includes the matter which has been previously confessed. Sometimes it is necessary. If for some reason or other a confession has been bad and sacrilegious, it must be repeated. If other confessions have followed upon a bad one, which has not been righted,

all subsequent ones are unworthy, and must all likewise be reiterated. Should such an awful misfortune befall you, hasten to make good your confessions, that your guilt may not grow from day to day. Bad confessions lead to obduracy of the heart; the false shame increases and finally brings the wretched sinner to despair.

In many cases a general confession, though not obligatory, may be very useful and salutary. It is good to review, from time to time, our past life, and to recall to our mind the failings of the past, in order to foster in us a spirit of humility. There are occasions that suggest naturally such a revision of the past. When preparing for first holy Communion, entering upon a new state of life, at a mission, the closing period of life should be thoroughly reviewed, corrected and definitely settled. Then we may start afresh undisturbed by scruples, with a new heart, a happy unconcern, and free from the gloom and shadows of former faults. It is a great thing to be able to leave the past behind and all its dark memories, and to begin life again, another man, with unbroken courage and with an unsullied soul. Well, my friends, a general confession affords us this golden opportunity, it strikes the balance of our past life, disfigured, perhaps, by many shortcomings, turns the leaf and puts before us a new, bright, clean page!

There may be some sins of darker hue committed in bygone days, but never forgotten. It is well to weep over them again and again in a renewed confession, until their scarlet dyes fade and are bleached by the tears of repentance. We recommend, therefore, to single out the grosser offenses of a past life and to reconfess them at stated intervals; for, though time may soften the sorrow for our sins, yet they should always remain a matter of regret, even as the grief for our dear departed ones haunts lingeringly the silent chambers of our memory.

General confession has many other beneficial effects. It makes us realize how numerous the sins and thoughtless transgressions of a given period are. Thus it instils greater watchfulness into our hearts and urges us to proceed more cautiously in our various dealings. It inflames our fervor, strengthens our good resolutions, and inspires us with a zeal for performing works of penance. It also purifies our heart more and more, and whets the conscience that has been dulled by frequent abuse. It supplies the defects and imperfections of former confessions. It silences the misgivings about the past, and gives calm and peace to our soul. And, then,

the assurance and confidence with which we will look forward to the inevitable, severe account that we must render to our Master, after we have again and again made our reckoning with His authorized representative on earth, who has acquitted us of all our debts: nothing will there be to make us falter on the threshold of the eternal gates and hesitate to meet the searching eye of the Most High.

III. Though the essential effects of the holy Sacrament of Penance flow spontaneously from its nature and inherent power, yet there remains ample room for the display of the personal influence of the confessor. The confessor is not only judge, but also friend, guide, counselor and spiritual physician of his penitents; he not only imparts absolution, but instructs, encourages, warns, chides or comforts as the case may be. One of his most important functions is to direct the penitent in the ways of virtue and to guard him against relapse. The greatest danger for the converted sinner is that he fall back into his evil habits. If left to himself he will readily become a prey of the delusions of his own heart; he will again fall under the spell of his former bad companions; he will be bewildered by the false maxims of the world, and trapped in the snares which the enemy of his salvation will lay for him; but, above all, he will become the victim of his natural fickleness and self-indulgence. He evidently needs a friend, a guide, firm, enlightened, unbribed, that will tell him the truth and will insist on his using the proper means of sanctification. He needs an adviser to correct the ideas of the world and the errors of passion. He needs a strict unrelenting disciplinarian that will train him in the practise of virtue, that will deny him anything that would cause a relapse. All of these qualities are united in a good confessor.

Everyone who wishes to overcome sin and advance in Christian perfection should seek a good and experienced confessor. This choice is by far more important than that of a family physician. Yet great care is exercised in the latter. Not every confessor, however learned and zealous he be, will appeal to every penitent. Pray fervently to the Holy Ghost that He may help you to find a discreet, saintly and enlightened confessor. The salutary influence of confession is greatly paralyzed, because penitents roam from one confessor to the other. Such penitents are not sincere; they only desire absolution, and do not care for instrutcion and direction; they do not earnestly intend to give up their sins and the occasion of sin. Yes, they fear the control of the regular confessor, his insistance on the

correction of certain vices, and his uncompromising attitude toward the encroachments of their self-love. Regular confession to a steady confessor is the surest barrier against relapse and the strongest incentive to a fervent and pure life. If you attach yourself to one confessor and invariably return to him, it will seem to you as though his eye were continually watching you and your actions. And this thought will be a powerful safeguard in the hour of temptation; it will put a happy restraint upon you and deter you from unbecoming and frivolous conduct. You will feel embarrassed to accuse your self of the same weakness and disloyalty to God and your holiest resolutions; and from this embarrassment a strong, vigorous, determined purpose of complete and serious amendment will be born.

Thus, my dear friends, cling and adhere to one confessor, whom you can approach with full confidence. Open to him your heart; disclose to him not only your sins, but also your inclinations, your struggles, your temptations. Be candid. Trust him with childlike confidence. He will soon know your heart, better than you do yourself. He will detect the subtle artifices of passion, the threatening dangers, the faint beginnings of vice. He will heal the wounds of your soul and patiently nurse the flickering taper of supernatural life in your breast, until it grows into a bright, energetic flame. Respect, obey and follow him, and he will be for you a celestial Raphael, and guide to heaven.

Sincere Catholics do not look upon holy confession as a heavy burden and a rough yoke. It is regarded as a source of peace and a soothing balm for the heart. Who has not observed the anxiety and alarm of the sick before the arrival of the priest, and the wonderful calm and strong, peaceful trust, in the very face of death, after confession. The same benign influence is experienced by the healthy. Confession, indeed, does much to brighten our lives and to ease our heavy-laden and harassed hearts. We misinterpret the intention of Our Lord, if we only emphasize those features that shock the tender sensibilities of the human heart. Aye, holy confession is a humiliating accusation of our frailty and malice. But this is the bitter root, which brings forth the sweetest fruits. And holy confession is infinitely more; it is the Sacrament of confidence, which unburdens the soul, of paternal correction and instruction; of solace and encouragement in the struggle against sin and temptation. May it be to you a source of strength and comfort in life; a solace in the hour of death and the pledge of eternal peace and happiness. Amen.

# XVIII. INDULGENCES

BY THE REV. G. LEE, C.S.SP.

"Whatsoever thou shalt loose upon earth, it shall be loosed also in heaven." —Matt. xvi, 19.

*SYNOPSIS.—Indulgences, an interesting subject for Catholics. Granted by the Church always, and always characteristic of her. Heresy opposed to them; ignorance not favorable; piety eager in pursuit of them. Their manifold utility.*

*I. Their use refines faith by exercising it highly. Truths proposed and implied; summary of doctrines in doctrine of indulgences; frame of mind superinduced; theologian's commendation. Church devotion; supernatural habit.*

*II. Immediate value of indulgences, as seen by faith. Their definition. Real remissions; real satisfactions. Need and existence illustrated by God's recorded dealings with man. Pardon, greatest good; but erasure of penalties, very desirable; good for us, for others, for God's glory.*

*III. Indirect results of indulgences, of great consequence. They favor acquisition and maintenance of state of grace; also freedom from venial sin; frequentation of the Sacraments, use of best devotions, etc.*

*Conclusion.—Recommendation of saints to those who aspire to sanctity, to gain many indulgences; St Alphonsus and St. Leonard. Wisdom of profiting by power of the keys.*

Indulgences, as Catholics understand them, are interesting even for their history. They began to be granted very early, probably as early as the Power of the Keys began to be exercised. We have Scripture testimony that the Apostles remitted, in the person of Christ, the penalties of sin as well as its guilt (II Cor. ii, 10). In the martyr ages the suffering witnesses of Our Lord obtained alleviations of the severe canonical penances then imposed on those who had erred, endurance for the faith being offered to God in satisfaction. And when the great carnal revolt came in the sixteenth century, the explicit warfare was on what looked weak and unimportant, on the Church's method and power of granting extraordinary remissions. Then and always views and practises concerning indulgences may be taken as signs or tests of supernatural faith and thorough Catholicity.

From a definition of the Council of Trent we learn that it is heresy to deny the Church's power to grant indulgences, heresy also to deny their utility to the Christian people. The loosing on earth,

to which Our Lord commissioned His apostles and their successors, is always a reality, so precious a reality that it draws with it a corresponding loosing in heaven. However, my brethren, even among ourselves there may be rather divergent ideas of indulgences, at least practical views that have divergent results. The gaining of them being neither of strict need nor of strict obligation in a Christian life, their comparative importance is sometimes superficially concluded. Then, also, the theoretic uncertainty of the extent to which they, on any given occasion, are really gained, may be heard flippantly advanced as an excuse for neglecting them. But the Church's action, my brethren, is always our surest standard, and her best children's practise is our example. She makes much of indulgences, strongly urging us to profit by them. Her leading is followed by the faithful, especially by the most saintly of them—in imitation, indeed, of the canonized saints. They are eager and industrious in the pursuit of indulgences, and the visible consequence is great progress in piety and holiness. That such would be the fruit in any Catholic life, of profiting by the Church remissions, is to be expected from their very nature, for these, among other things, are true of them: they refine faith, they are immediately most valuable, they have indirect results of precious consequence.

I. In the first place we may consider how much and how well faith is exercised in the intelligent use of indulgences. This is a point of great practical importance, a point perhaps too little remarked. For think, my brethren, what belief there is, belief, too, of the highest and most delicate kind in the appreciation of these supernatural privileges. When you set about gaining an indulgence, you implicitly say: I believe that satisfaction has to be made for sin even when its guilt is already forgiven, as Holy Scripture indicates and Christian sense suggests; I believe God demands that satisfaction, and so will require it hereafter if it be not made here; I believe He has given His Church power to satisfy, on certain conditions, for individual sinners by offering other satisfactions in place of theirs; I believe she has in the merits of her divine Spouse, and of His saints, an inexhaustible treasury from which to draw these vicarious satisfactions. Good reason, then, has a great living theologian to affirm that the Catholic doctrine of indulgences is a kind of compendium of many most consoling doctrines; and for its effect on the Christian mind and temper, he adds: "It shows forth the immensity and the foulness of sin; it illustrates the infinity and the efficacy

of Christ's merits; it manifests God's most tender mercy and His generosity; it shows how acceptable with Him are the just and how powerful; it commends union among the faithful and mutual charity; it excites the desire and the disposition to do penance; it promotes hatred of offenses and the conversion of offenders; it inflames zeal for souls and for the divine glory" (Lehmkuhl ii, 371).

Now the frame of mind in which these beliefs and promptings put us, is a very desirable frame of mind, because a very Catholic one. We are turned to our mother, the Church, are looking into her face and listening to her. Her kind solicitude for us becomes better known and more esteemed; we are glad to be in her hands, as should her trusting children. And notice, my brethren, how simply, how truly supernatural are such dispositions. The Catholic seeking to gain indulgences is confidently dealing in things invisible, in things altogether unworldly, altogether spiritual. He works and gets no earthly wages; he pays and is given no human receipt. He is authoritatively told that he will find a rich equivalent, a superabundantly surpassing value for his money, in the life to come, in heaven; and he is satisfied, he accepts the bargain. The gradual influence on his character and life of these soul transactions is truly, though hiddenly, wonderful; for his faith acquires a most practical fulness, even in details, and his sense of what appeareth not is strengthened and refined.

II. The immediate value of indulgences, in themselves, ought to be evident to an instructed believer. Faith, certainly, is required in order to realize their value, as they are of things invisible; but that, of course, makes their substance not less but more real. Being of the soul and of God, of its more perfect relations with Him, they could not fail to have a most sacred reality. They are defined as remissions of the temporal punishment due to sin of which the guilt has been forgiven. As they are granted by ecclesiastical authority, they constitute no Sacrament, though they are very closely connected with several of the Sacraments, especially with the Sacrament of Penance. The immensity of the field which they cover may be estimated by the amount and the frequency of the sins of Christians, and by the magnitude of the penalties that those sins deserve. For every offense satisfaction is due, and has some time to be made. The Scripture exacting of the last farthing is an expression of God's justice, and of the rightful balancing of works and rewards. With the forgiveness of guilt goes necessarily the remission of *eternal*

punishment; for divine friendship, which is restored in that forgiveness, claims the forgiven one for heaven. But temporal punishments in satisfaction for sin's outrages, and in repair of its damages, are still matter of course and order. Reasoning on the nature of wilful offenses, and on their treatment as between man and man, may well convince us that pains are due even when faults are forgiven. But we have a better way of arriving at a correct conclusion: we have the history of heaven's merciful dealings with mankind.

God, as you may recall, my brethren, forgave and punished, forgave and punished, all down through the ages. He continues to do so at the present day; and He has explicitly revealed that the pains not borne by His wayward children in this life await them in the next. The straw and chaff and dross must meet the fire before the good grain is garnered and the pure gold is approved.

Now forgiveness of guilt is itself so great an acquisition that some penitents may think of it alone, overlooking completely their many incurred and unpaid debts. In this they are not wise, nor very spiritual minded; nor is it likely they fully appreciate their past guilt. It is noticeable how the convert saints—of all degrees of conversion and of sanctity—turned and rushed to severely penitential practises. They seemed never satisfied with making satisfaction. They had sinned—what could they do to repair the damage! What could they do to forestall the inevitable accounting? Surely there must be some mistake in common sinners taking things so easy. It may even be questioned whether their concerning themselves so exclusively about pardon may not come from its comparative ease in the bountiful dispensation under which we live; whilst penance is put off, because of its real or imagined difficulty. But such shirking would be useless, as payment would finally have to be made, and made, perhaps, with added interest because of the negligent delay.

By these considerations we may, my brethren, begin to comprehend what rich resources indulgences can prove to us. The effort to gain them is little, if at all, painful; and they, when gained, are satisfactory to an unlimited degree. True satisfaction they are also —a fact to be much insisted on—satisfactions to the justice and holiness of God. For they are no mere commutation of the Church's imposed penances; they are rather a rich appropriation of works and merits from her treasury to our poor but divinely accepted credit. The value of this appropriation is to us incalculable. Our heavy

debts are admirably paid, and our friendship with our all holy Lord has, then, the fulness of there being nothing to stand between us. That we do not oftener think of this latter effect of gained indulgences is surprising, considering that we do really love God. For to leave penalties due, when we might entirely erase them, is foolishly unfilial. Indulgences clear accounts and leave us due from our heavenly Father but caresses and new favors.

Then, for others, for our departed brethren, how immediately valuable are not our applied indulgences! Holy Church empowers us to offer nearly all the remissions we gain, by way of suffrage, for the suffering souls in purgatory. They can not now help themselves; but by our help they attain to the immediate possession of God, to the sight and enjoyment of Him. Such a fruit of our endeavors can be fairly appreciated by those alone who have experienced some longing for the sovereign good, or have gone deeply into the revealed wretchedness of waiting and expiating in the prison of the imperfect. Detention there is necessary, till satisfaction is fully made; but each moment's retarded vision is like a lost world of bliss.

Another loss may escape the attention of some of us, though it would enkindle the zeal of us all if we realized its regretableness. It is the loss of glory to God by the delay of those holy souls' entrance into heaven. They undoubtedly glorify Him by their patient process of purification, but not as they would by their songs of beatified praise. So our leaving them long in purgatory, when by applied indulgences we could send them home at once to heaven, is neglecting to procure God's greater glory. What they in return would do for us if their earlier possession of beatitude were through our efforts, should also be included in our estimate of the immediate value of indulgences.

III. In the third place, some indirect results of indulgences claim our most attentive consideration. They are of really precious consequence. Whoever profits by an indulgence must be in the state of grace; and see, my brethren, what that implies. The state of grace is the highest quality any created being can possess. It is it that gives supernatural value to every just soul of man and every blissful spirit of angel. It is it that makes creatures fit for heaven, for it is it that makes them capable of friendship with their Creator. And this supreme quality and state is had and maintained by every simplest Catholic who really gains an indulgence at least for him-

self. Why so? Because it is the most essential of all the conditions. If the works prescribed were not finished in the state of grace, there would be no remission; as the Church's satisfactions are offered explicitly for the penalties due to *forgiven* sin. It is only God's friends who are indulged. Not that we pretend to know, more than did St. Paul, that we are worthy of love instead of hatred; but we confide in the ordinary means, taken prudently and in all good will. It is part of the business in hand to be free from mortal sin; and that Catholics commonly are so when they strive to gain an indulgence, we have strong assurance in their matter of fact sincerity. Here, then, is a necessary and an absolutely inestimable benefit resulting from so ordinary an act of piety.

Notice further, my brethren, that you are not kept at a distance merely from mortal sin by the sensible pursuit of indulgences: you are also more and more disentangled from venial failings. You want to gain plenary indulgences, to gain them completely, and you keep in mind that you must repent of a sin before the pains due to it can be effaced. Hence you try to repent of all your sins howsoever venial. Disliking to have the penalty over you, you much more dislike to have the fault on you; and thus you advance in the tender purity of conscience that spreads the glow of heaven over a lowly Christian life. Indeed, many of the common faithful, by a thrifty attention to indulgences, are drawn to higher paths of perfection than they at all suspect. So are men still happily taken in the nets that hang from the Fisherman's boat.

Another solid advantage which invariably results from the indulgence-seeking habit, must be patent to everyone. It is that the Sacraments are thereby more frequented. This result holy Church keeps plainly in view, since she so usually makes Confession and Communion a principal condition; and were there no other result this one alone would suffice to render the practise of indulgences valuable beyond expression. Of course, it may be said that Sacraments should be received for their own sake, for the grace of God which they contain and impart, and not for the accompanying remission of temporal punishments. Excellently true though this is, it is still but a partial truth. For one object does not exclude the other, rather is its attractive and most potent occasion. Nor is it anything either unusual or defective in Catholic practise to be drawn to great things by minor circumstances. The "cords of Adam" are various and variously blessed.

I wish I could say confidently to you, in conclusion, my brethren, what great preachers of Catholic devotion formerly said to the people. You want to be saints, they said, then gain all the indulgences you can. To both St. Alphonsus Liguori and St. Leonard of Port Maurice is this advice attributed. That wisely zealous guides of souls should indicate this simple course, need not surprise us. Even the few considerations we have been making on the utility of indulgences would lead us to the conclusion that they are exceedingly to be sought.

See well, then, my brethren, what assets you draw from these Church treasures. Let no part of the Power of the Keys be unexercised in your behalf as it was all given for your need and for your more abundant salvation. You are never more sensible that the Church is your mother than when you are profiting of her compassion; nor can you much need reminding that having her in practise as your mother is an unfailing way of having God as your Father. All virtues accompany the devotion of indulgences, beginning with divine ones, as we have seen concerning faith. Good works, too, are both their means and their effect, they themselves often constituting a work of mercy of unsurpassed excellence. Meantime they keep souls engaged with what is best and highest in devotion: with the mysteries of Our Lord and His mother; with Masses, Sacraments and crosses; with rosaries, scapulars, shrines; with alms, fastings, prayers—with all, in a word, that the Spirit-led Church most fondly proposes and most ardently recommends. In fact, of indulgences, as of heavenly wisdom, may it be said that they are an infinite treasure to men, by which they that use them become the friends of God.

# XIX. EXTREME UNCTION AND THE SPIRITUAL CARE OF THE SICK

BY THE REV. FERREOL GIRARDEY, C.SS.R.

"It is appointed for men once to die.—Hebr. ix, 27.

*SYNOPSIS.—Death is certain and terrible; on it depends man's eternity. Infinite goodness of Christ in providing man with all the helps he needs from his birth to his last hour. I. Extreme Unction the Sacrament of the dying. II. Spiritual care of the sick and dying.*

*I. Extreme Unction.—The object or end of the Sacrament of Extreme Unction. It is a real Sacrament. It is a medicine for both soul and body. Who may and may not receive it. To be administered only once in the same spell of sickness. Dispositions required for its reception. Very sinful to neglect it. The minister and ceremonies of Extreme Unction. Its effects.*

*II. Spiritual Care of the Sick and Dying.—Charity toward our neighbor is of two kinds, corporal and spiritual. Works of mercy rewarded by Christ as if done to Himself. Sickness, a punishment of sin, and yet a great blessing! First spiritual care of the sick consists in removing whatever endangers their salvation. Beware of certain physicians! The sick to be exhorted to patience and resignation. What to do for invalids, for various kinds of sick persons. How and when to summon the priest. How to administer private baptism. Preparations to be made for the reception of the last Sacraments. How to help the sick who are very low, who are in their agony. How God will reward those who spiritually care for the sick.*

Death is so certain that no sane person has ever denied or doubted it. Death spares no one. The moment or hour of death is indeed terrible, for on it depends man's eternity. He who dies in the state of grace will enjoy an eternity of perfect happiness in heaven. He who dies in the state of mortal sin shall be doomed forever to the endless torments and misery of hell. As death comes but once for each man, there can be no remedy for a bad death. Hence it behooves us to spare no pains, to make every exertion, to use every means in our power that we may die a good death, worthy of a Christian.

The infinite love of Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ for mankind manifests itself to us in every way during the whole course of our life. At our first entrance into this world He has provided the Sacrament of Baptism for our spiritual birth and regeneration, making us thereby children of His heavenly Father, and uniting us

closely to Himself as members of His mystical body, the Church. During our whole life, besides numberless special graces to supply our spiritual wants in all circumstances, He imparts to us in the other Sacraments powerful helps to sanctify ourselves more and more, and to persevere in His grace and friendship. And when the formidable hour of death approaches, and our enemies are about to make a last strenuous effort to bring about our ruin we may make use of a special Sacrament, the Sacrament of Extreme Unction, to strengthen us in that emergency, to enable us to obtain a final victory over our enemies, and to become forever united with Him in the ineffable joys of heaven. Let us this day consider: 1, the Sacrament of Extreme Unction, and, 2, how we should spiritually assist the sick and the dying that they may draw profit from their illness and obtain the grace of a truly Christian death.

I. *The Sacrament of Extreme Unction.*—The Sacrament of Extreme Unction was instituted by Our Lord Jesus Christ to purify the dying, to strengthen them in their last combat, to enable them to pass through their agony with Christian fortitude, and if profitable to their soul, to restore health to their body.

Extreme Unction has all the requisites of a Sacrament. First, it was instituted by our divine Saviour Himself, as may be easily inferred from the language used by St. James when speaking of this Sacrament. He says: "Is any one sick among you? Let him bring in the priests of the Church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord; and the prayer of faith shall save the sick man, and the Lord shall raise him up, and if he be in sins, they shall be forgiven him" (James v, 14, 15). From these inspired words of St. James it is clear that he speaks of the Sacrament of Extreme Unction, and that this Sacrament confers grace of itself. But this it could not do unless it were instituted by the author of grace Himself, Jesus Christ, who alone can so attach grace to sign or action.

In the next place we have in Extreme Unction a visible sign—the *oil* solemnly blessed for the sick by the bishop at Mass on Holy Thursday, and the *anointing with it* of the five senses of the sick with the prescribed formula designating what is being done by the priest. Finally, as we see from the words of St. James, in Extreme Unction there is an invisible grace, special to this Sacrament, that is conferred on the sick by the application of the visible sign to the

senses of the sick. This grace consists in a certain remission of sins and other spiritual effects.

The Church in her Ritual tells us that the Sacrament of Extreme Unction is a salutary medicine not only for the soul, but also for the body of the sick who are in danger of death. It directs the priest to administer it to them while they are still in possession of their senses, so that they may derive greater fruits from it by their faith and piety. It should usually be preceded by the confession of the sick person and the reception of the holy Viaticum.

Extreme Unction is to be administered only to those members of the Church who are in danger of death from sickness. Persons not baptized, or not members of the Church, can not receive this Sacrament; nor children who have not yet attained the age of reason. In practise it should be administered to children over six years of age who are in danger of death. It should be administered to those aged persons having no particular disease, but whose failing strength shows that death may carry them off at any moment. It should be administered to the dangerously sick and dying, even though they be unconscious, especially if they have been practical Catholics, and even if they have been remiss and negligent in the practise of their religious duties, so long as they have not in health denied the faith.

Extreme Unction may be administered only once in the same spell of sickness. There are diseases that usually are of long standing, and that bring the patient several or even many times to death's door before ending fatally; for instance, consumption, heart disease. One day, or one moment the sick person shows symptoms of approaching death, and in a day or even a few hours, rallies again and is soon out of danger. A few weeks, a few months later, the same person seems again on the verge of death from the very same disease. Extreme Unction may and should be administered at every fresh spell or relapse into the danger of death.

Extreme Unction, being a Sacrament of the living, should be received in the state of grace. Hence the sick person should, if able, previously make his confession and receive the Sacrament of Penance. Extreme Unction is not of absolute necessity for salvation, but it would be very sinful for a dangerously sick person wilfully to neglect receiving so great a means of salvation, and for the priest failing to administer it through wilful neglect.

Extreme Unction can be administered only by those invested with the priesthood. In fact, it is a function pertaining not to every

priest, but to the parish priest of the sick person, or his assistant. The Church has prescribed diverse beautiful ceremonies for its administration. The priest first sprinkles the room, the sick person and the persons present, with holy water, and recites appropriate prayers. The *Confiteor* is then recited, during which the sick person should make acts of contrition, of confidence in God's mercy, and of resignation to His holy will. The priest then dips his right thumb into the blessed oil and with it anoints first the eyes, then the ears, then the nostrils, then the closed lips, then the palms of the hands, and finally the soles of the feet of the sick person, saying at each anointing: "By this holy unction and by His own most tender mercy, may the Lord forgive thee whatever sins thou hast committed with thy *sight*—with thy *hearing*—with thy *smell*—with thy *taste* and *speech*—with thy *touch*—with thy *steps*." During this time the sick persons should interiorly join the priest in asking God's forgiveness for the many sins he committed during life with the senses and organs of his body. We can see from this why this Sacrament, which is especially a Sacrament of prayer, should be administered to the sick while they are still in possession of all their faculties, that, joining in the prayers, they may derive greater benefit therefrom. In case the sick person is already in his agony and is actually dying, the ceremonies may be greatly curtailed, even, if necessary, to a single anointing and a single formula.

Extreme Unction produces many salutary effects. In the first place, it cleanses the soul from the remains of sin, uneasiness, worry of mind, tepidity and sloth, which, on account of the more or less insidious and violent temptations of the evil one at the hour of death, may prove greatly dangerous to the salvation of the sick person. In the second place, Extreme Unction imparts to the dying calmness, resignation, courage and confidence in the divine mercy. Thirdly, it purifies the soul of venial sins, and in certain cases it indirectly cleanses it of mortal sins; for instance, when from various causes, such as unconsciousness, speechlessness, the priest's ignorance of the language of the sick person, the latter can not confess; also, if the sick person be in the state of mortal sin without being aware of it. Fourthly, Extreme Unction imparts to the sick person strength and patience to bear his pains and to give up his life willingly to God. Fifthly, "Blessed oil," says St. Cyril of Jerusalem, "has the power not only to burn away the vestiges of sin and purify the soul, but also to put to flight the invisible power of the evil one."

Finally, if expedient to the soul of the sick person, Extreme Unction contributes to restore the health of his body. For this reason also Extreme Unction should not be deferred too long, otherwise it will hardly be able, without evident miracle, which no one has a right to expect, to contribute to the restoration of the actually dying person to health. Every priest who has been in the active ministry for a number of years can testify to the restoration to health of persons who were sick beyond recovery by the reception of the Sacrament of Extreme Unction.

We should be grateful to God for having made us members of the Catholic Church, in which there are so many helps to salvation not only during life, but especially at the last hour, enabling us to die in His grace and friendship with the firm hope of sharing His own happiness in heaven for all eternity.

II. *The Spiritual Care of the Sick.*—It is in our power to practise charity toward the sick in two ways—by attending to their bodily wants and by assisting them in their spiritual wants. Our divine Saviour will at the last judgment declare worthy of heavenly reward those who, for His sake, performed corporal works of mercy toward the needy, among whom He makes special mention of the sick, because He considers these works as done to Himself, saying: "Amen, I say to you, as long as you did it to one of these my least brethren, you did it to me" (Mat. xxv, 40). The Church grants an indulgence of forty days to those who, through motives of charity, visit the sick. How many religious orders and congregations devote themselves to works of corporal mercy, and care for almost every ill to which mankind is subject, and practise therein the most heroic virtue, and are therefore a subject of wonder and admiration to even the enemies of our holy religion! While performing the corporal works of mercy, they profit by every opportunity to minister to the spiritual wants of the sick. And how many careless Catholics and great sinners even, hardened in crime, they are the means of converting and of helping to die a holy death, and how many non-Catholics do they not bring to the true fold, thus assisting them in securing their salvation! Thus, with God's help, they are instrumental in saving multitudes of persons, who, but for them, would be eternally lost! The ministering to the spiritual wants of the sick is as far more noble and more important than attending to their bodily wants, as the soul and eternity are above the corruptible body and this material and transitory world. What treasures of

merit may we not lay up for ourselves in heaven if, when there is occasion, we care for the spiritual wants of the sick in our family, of those under our charge, without neglecting to minister to their bodily wants.

Sickness, the usual forerunner of death, came into the world as a punishment of sin, and should be accepted as such. Although it is, in this sense, a punishment, yet, under another aspect it may be a real blessing productive of many benefits. How many, who for years lived far from God, slaves to sinful habits, in total disregard of their salvation, and who would otherwise never repent or amend their life and thus die miserably in their sins, are thoroughly converted on a bed of sickness, which brings them back to their senses and to God, and rescues them from eternal perdition! If we thus look upon sickness and sufferings in the light of faith, we shall clearly see that they are not real evils, but real blessings of God's goodness and mercy.

The first spiritual care of the sick consists in removing from them what may prove injurious to their salvation, such as evil companions, bad books and papers, and the like. Also weapons and other means of destruction from those who may in some way or other be inclined to despondency, or are subject to temptations of self-destruction. In many cases a particular care should be taken in choosing a conscientious physician. How many physicians, for the sake of filthy lucre, do and prescribe things to their patients which are directly opposed to the divine law and cry to heaven for vengeance! Others, through a pretense of not exciting or frightening the sick person, prevent the priest being called, at least in time to prepare the sick for death, and thus endanger his salvation. Others, under the plea of calming, quieting pain, of prolonging the life of the sick, place them constantly under the influence of narcotics, and thus render them unfit and unable to realize their dangerous state and to prepare to render an account of their life before the judgment seat of Christ. The principal question with the sick and dying is not how to escape pain, but how to prepare to meet their God. Hence you must never allow physicians to exercise on the sick of your family or those intrusted to your care, such diabolical cruelty as to rob them of the power of making use of their last chance of salvation.

Care should be taken to exhort the sick to bear their pains and discomforts with patience—that virtue which is so necessary, but

so seldom practised. Tell them to say: "O Lord, give me patience; Mary and mother, help me to bear these pains. My God, thy will be done, and not mine. I accept all these sufferings as a penance for my sins, which have deserved hell, and for which thou, O Jesus, hast undergone fearful torments and a most cruel death. O Lord, punish me now in thy love and mercy, but spare me in eternity."

As to persons whose sickness is not dangerous and only of very short duration, there is no necessity of sending for the priest. If the illness be chronic and keeps the sick person from leaving the house, the priest should be called to administer to him his Easter duties, and the Sacrament of Penance and holy Communion every month, or at least four or five times a year. To those sick persons who have neglected the practise of their religion, the priest should be summoned long before the sickness becomes dangerous, so that they may have time sufficient to return sincerely to God and prepare well for their last hour. When there is good reason to summon the priest to attend a sick person, it should be done in the day time as far as possible, nor should the priest be compelled, where there is no immediate danger, to lay important duties aside. When the severe illness comes on suddenly, or when there is immediate danger of death, then there must be no delay in sending at once for the priest. Care should, however, be taken that the messenger be capable of giving an *intelligent* account of the sick person and his illness, so that the priest may come better prepared to make the necessary ministrations. Every Catholic should know how to baptize newly born children in danger of death when the priest can not be had in time. Pour any natural water on the head while saying: "I baptize thee in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost."

If the sick person is to receive the last Sacraments, the room and bed should be clean; all unbecoming and worldly things should be removed. A small table covered with a white cloth, on which a crucifix is placed between two blessed candles, with holy water, and a tumbler of water and a spoon; near by a basin of water with soap and towel to wash the priest's hands. Care should be taken to help the sick person to prepare to receive the Sacraments worthily, by reading to him from a prayer-book or suggesting acts of faith, hope and charity, contrition, patience, resignation, conformity with God's holy will in accepting his pains and death itself; also acts of longing for holy Communion, and for the endless joys of heaven. After the

administration of the last Sacraments help the sick person to make acts of faith and thanksgiving, of self-offering, as also others acts similar to those made or suggested before their reception. If the sick person lingers for days and is perfectly conscious, a little pious reading, for instance, of the Passion of Our Lord from the Gospel will fill him with sentiments of divine love and resignation to the divine Will.

If the sick person is very low avoid all worldly and unprofitable conversation; exclude persons visiting out of idle curiosity, or who may be a cause of sin to the sick. Let only those be in the room whose presence is necessary or really useful. From time to time suggest pious thoughts, pious aspirations, such as these: "How little I endure here, I a sinner, in comparison to Jesus Christ dying amid cruel torments on the Cross; there was no one to give Him any relief, a drink of water, or a kind word; and here I am in a comfortable bed, with every relief that those who love me can give me!" Say some times to the sick person: "You can not find rest or comfort; have a little patience, and you will obtain a rest of happiness in heaven!" Say: "O my Jesus, give me patience to bear my pains for the love of thee who hast died for me, and as a penance for my sins. I am willing to suffer as much and as long as it may please thee, but help me to be patient; I unite my sufferings and my death with thy passion and death on the Cross." Tell the sick person how great merit he can gain by an entire resignation, saying: "My Lord, not as I will, but as thou wilt." Inspire him with confidence in the divine mercy by mentioning how Jesus forgave repentant sinners, such as the publican, Mary Magdalen, the penitent thief; how He died to save them, and that we should therefore place all our confidence in His merits, and also in the intercession of the Blessed Virgin, given to us as our mother by Jesus Christ himself in His last will.

When the sick person nears his end give him repeatedly the crucifix to kiss; show him an image of Mary, repeat in his hearing: "My God, I believe in thee, I believe all that the Catholic Church teaches, and I wish to die in her faith; my God, I hope in thee; my God, I love thee with all my heart; I love my neighbor as myself, and for the love of thee I forgive all who may have injured me, and ask forgiveness of all whom I may have injured. My God, forgive me my many sins; I am sorry for them, and with the help of thy grace I will sin no more. Accept my sufferings and my death

as an atonement for them. Jesus, Mary and Joseph, I give you my heart and soul; Jesus, Mary and Joseph, assist me in my last agony; Jesus, Mary and Joseph, may I breath forth my soul with you in peace." When the agony is on, place the blessed candle in his hand, sprinkle him and the room with holy water from time to time, to expel the spirits of darkness hovering around him to make their last efforts to cause him to sin, and keep on whispering in his ear the holy names of Jesus and Mary, while the prayers for the departing soul are being recited. Do not cease until he has breathed forth his last gasp, and the soul has left the body, to be ushered before its sovereign Judge, for its final account, on which depends its eternal lot! O death! how terrible art thou!

If we thus strive to help the sick and dying to save their soul, God in His mercy will, as a due reward, not fail to send you similar help in your last moments to enable you to appear before Him well prepared for your great final account. You may rest assured that your charity will be richly rewarded, for, says He who is to be our Judge: "Amen, I say to you, as long as you did it to one of these, my least brethren, you did it to me" (Matt. xxv, 40).

# XX. HOLY ORDERS

BY THE VERY REV. JAMES J. FOX, D.D.

"For every high priest taken from among men is ordained for men in the things that appertain to God that he may offer up gifts and sacrifices for sins."—Heb. v, 1.

*SYNOPSIS.—Introduction.—Holy Orders is the Sacrament instituted for the perpetuation of the spiritual life and activity of the Church. The priesthood is the essential order imparted. By Holy Orders the priest is constituted the minister of the people, and the minister of God.*

*I. The priest is the minister of the people. Sacrifice is the highest form of worship—as the religion of Christ is embodied in a visible society, so it has a visible sacrifice. The priest acts in the name of the Church—in his person we are all represented.*

*II. The priest is the minister of God. Through his power God places at our disposal the Victim for the Sacrifice. By the priest God dispenses to us the other gifts of salvation—Faith, or divine truth—the life of his soul in Baptism—the resurrection of the soul in Penance—strength and comfort in Extreme Unction—by the priest He gives us Himself in the Holy Communion.*

*III. Relation of the other orders to the priesthood.*

*Conclusion.*

The grace of God, through Jesus Christ, is the life of the Christian soul and the life of that society of souls established by Jesus Christ which we call the Church. To generate, strengthen and preserve that life in the individual and in the society Christ instituted the Sacraments as the channels of special forms of that grace, to meet the great occasions and needs of the soul. Two of these Sacraments have for their object to propagate and continue, throughout the passing generations of men, the divine society itself. One of these is Matrimony; the other is Holy Orders. Holy Orders is a Sacrament, for, under visible signs employed in ordination, a special grace is conveyed; what the nature of that grace is we shall consider in this instruction.

There are, as you know, several steps or grades to be successively received in the Sacrament of Holy Orders: four introductory ones, called minor orders; two others, approaching more intimately to the priesthood itself, and the episcopate. Now the soul of all is the priesthood; to it the others are related as to the center; for in it the others exist. The priesthood is, too, one may say, the very heart

of the Church, from whose action the life-giving grace of Christ is circulated through all her members. The Society of Jesus Christ, the Church, is the union of God and His people. That union finds itself completed in the office of the priesthood. The priest is at once the man of the people and the man of God. Let us examine under these two aspects the office to which he is chosen and ordained by the Sacrament of Holy Orders. The priest is the man of the people; their agent, to borrow the phrase of St. Paul in the things that appertain to God.

I. What we call religious worship consists in acknowledging, by suitable actions, internal and external, the majesty, power, holiness of the Almighty, and our complete dependence on Him, as our creator and our end. Among all the various external actions which man employs to embody that worship, the most universal, the most significant is that called sacrifice. Sacrifice of various kinds was the chief element of worship in the ancient law which God gave to the Israelites, to instruct them how they should honor Him in a way pleasing to Himself. These sacrifices consisted of the fruits of the earth, and of animals which were consumed in order to testify that He in whose honor they were offered up is the sovereign law of heaven and earth, the Master of life and death. But the Old Law was in every way imperfect; all its rites and ceremonies were but figures of the new covenant of the Gospel. Its various sacrifices were but foreshadowings of the one great sacrifice of the New Law. You know what that sacrifice is. Jesus Christ, the Son of God, offered Himself up, once for all, on the altar of the Cross, as a sufficient expiation for all men throughout the ages; a victim perfectly worthy of the infinite majesty and holiness of God. Thereafter it was impossible that ever again the blood of sheep or oxen could be pleasing to the Almighty. The only sacrifice worthy of the New Testament was the one holy unspotted victim offered up by the Saviour himself. But, then, was the religion that He established to be deprived of the chief element of divine worship? No; for, as you know, Our Lord provided at His Last Supper that the supreme sacrifice which He was to offer on the morrow, from the Cross of Calvary, should continue to be offered up daily, in His Church, from the rising of the sun to the going down thereof, till the end of time. As His religion was to be embodied in a living visible society, so it should have a living visible priesthood to offer up a living visible sacrifice. When He had given His Apostles His

body and the chalice of His blood, that was to be shed for them and for many to the remission of sins, He appointed them priests, to continue the mystical sacrifice. "Do this in commemoration of me." And in virtue of the Sacrament of Holy Orders that power is handed down in the Church from man to man, from generation to generation.

Christ continues as the invisible High Priest to offer the Holy Mass to God; His visible representative on earth is the priest, who at the same time is the representative of the people, on whose behalf the sacrifice is carried out. He is not merely chosen and appointed; he is consecrated by the Sacrament which imparts to him a share in the priesthood of Jesus Christ. This character is not something merely attached to his personality, as an office; it enters into and forms a feature of his very soul, never to be effaced in time or eternity. No wonder that the Church has surrounded the ordination of a priest with the most impressive ceremonies of her ritual. While the candidate lies prostrate before the altar, the clergy and the people raise their voices to implore the mercy and grace of God for the chosen one, that he may worthily receive the great commission from on high. The Holy Ghost, the Sanctifier, is invoked to come down upon him. As the rite proceeds, the bishop addresses him solemn warning and weighty counsel, reminding him of the tremendous mysteries he will handle in his new office. Bishop and assistants implore the Almighty to bless, to sanctify and to consecrate the man to the service of the things of heaven. As external signs of the Sacrament of Holy Orders, the instruments of the sacrifice are placed in his hands, and the bishop's hand is extended over him. The power of consecrating and offering the Holy Mass is communicated to him, as it was by the Saviour himself to the Apostles. Finally he is endowed with the power to forgive sins. Receive the Holy Ghost. Whose sins you forgive they are forgiven. Then, when the ordination is completed, this member of the Church is constituted her minister, the agent of his brethren, to represent them and act in their name in the things of God. "For every high priest taken from among men is ordained for men in the things that appertain to God, that he may offer up gifts and sacrifices for sins" (Heb. v, 1). Henceforth, as he stands at the altar to perform the great sacrifice, he will not be a mere private individual; he will be the public minister and representative of the entire Christian family.

He takes in his hands the divine Victim, and in the name of the

entire Church, with her head, Jesus Christ, presents it, sacrifices it before the throne of the Most High. While the sacrifice of the Mass is the same sacrifice as that of the Cross, repeated in a mystical manner, yet in regard to the position of the Church there is a difference between the two. The sacrifice of the Cross was offered up by Jesus Christ alone; in the action of that sacrifice the Church had no active part. But in the Mass the Church does participate in the sacrificial action. It is her sacrifice to God; it is her gift, which has been placed at her disposal by her divine Founder in order that she may be able to present to the Creator a worship worthy of His infinite majesty. Now the Church, made up of an immense number of persons, must act through individuals as her agents or representatives; and the priest is the agent of the Church acting in her name as he celebrates the sacred mysteries. Just as the act of a ruler or of an ambassador is the act of the nation which he represents, so the sacrificial action of the priest is the act of us all in our character as members of the Church of Jesus Christ. She and you all act by his hand, pray with his lips. Listen to the prayers of the Mass and you will observe that the priest is not using the words "I" and "my," but "me" and "our" and "us." At the beginning of the collect he says: "Let us pray." Opening the Canon or most solemn part of the Mass he prays: "We humbly beseech thee, most merciful Father, that thou wouldst vouchsafe to accept and bless these gifts, this holy unspotted sacrifice which in the first place we offer thee for thy holy Catholic Church." Whether a congregation be present or not, while exercising his office the priest speaks for us all and is the personification of all; one person in whom all are united. If the ruler or ambassador of a country be great because the country is great, how high is the priestly dignity of Him in whose person is united the entire Church throughout the world! of him who, chosen from among men, is anointed and consecrated to treat with God in the name of all his brethren, and who is received and approved by God as an acceptable person duly qualified to discharge this majestic office.

II. While Holy Orders consecrate the priest to be the representative of the people before God, it constitutes him at the same time to be the coadjutor or agent of God toward men. "Let a man so account of us," says St. Paul, "as of the minister of Christ, and the dispensers of the mysteries of God" (I Cor. iv, 1). The priest, as we have seen, is the representative of the people as he stands at the

altar to celebrate the holy sacrifice of the Mass; and from this aspect of his function his dignity surpasses that attached to any other human office. But it is immeasurably enhanced by the role which, in the same sublime action, he plays as the minister and representative of God. In order that his religion and his people might forever be provided with a worthy sacrifice which should be pleasing to God, even though God had already received on the altar of the Cross a Victim that for the future disqualified all other victims, the products of the earth, from being any longer suitable gifts to lay upon the altar—Jesus Christ in His boundless love bequeathed Himself, His living personality, Body and Blood, to be at the disposal of His Church in order that her worship of the Almighty might be perfect and wholly acceptable to God. Christ, indeed, having died once, dieth now no more. Nevertheless, by a mystery of His omnipotence He continues in the Mass that same sacrifice which, in blood and death, was consummated on Calvary. He sitteth in glory at the right hand of the Father. Yet, by the power which He imparted to His Apostles, and which flows in an unbroken channel down the ages, in virtue of the Sacrament of Holy Orders, to the priest to-day, the minister of God pronounces the awful words of consecration; and, forthwith, the Lamb of God, slain for the sins of the world, is present on the altar. The words of God's minister pierce the heavens and the Son of God obeys the call of man, who is His representative. In the Old Testament we read of the encounter of Elias with the false prophets. That man of God laid his gift on the stone, raised his eyes and voice to heaven, imploring God to vouchsafe to give a sign in favor of His servant. Immediately, to the astonishment of the bystanders, flames shot down from the skies and consumed the victim. This wonder sinks into insignificance when compared to the answer which God makes to the call of the priest. He sends not fire to consume the host, but He sends down once more His only beloved Son to be the holy, unspotted Host, to be raised again from earth to heaven, to bring down, in return, mercy and grace on the children of men. At the words of the Blessed Virgin: "Be it done unto me according to thy word," the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity, descended on this earth; the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us. At the words of the priest, not once, but day after day, year after year, all over the world, the Word clothed in the flesh which He drew from His immaculate mother, descends among us, bestows Himself

on us, that for us and for all the faithful, living and dead, we may have an offering worthy to present before the throne of the Eternal Majesty.

What are the other gifts of God which His minister dispenses? The first is divine truth and doctrine. Faith, as the Apostle says, comes from hearing; and how shall men hear unless there be a preacher? And how shall any preach unless they be sent? The commission to preach was given by Christ to His Apostles. "Go forth and teach the nations." By the grace of Holy Orders the priest shares in that commission; in that Sacrament he is ordained to dispense the truths of faith and expound the precepts of Christ's law to the people. The human qualifications of the preacher may be brilliant or they may be mediocre, but it is not from his human gifts that he derives his authority. It is in virtue of the imposition of hands in the Sacrament of Holy Orders that he can stand before his people, to lay down the law of Christian life with the all-powerful sanction: "Thus saith the Lord". It is that same power which authorizes him to apply to himself the declaration of Christ: "My doctrine is not my doctrine, but the doctrine of him that sent me." Thus the priest is God's minister, who in His name enables us to fulfil the first condition of salvation, which is to know God, to learn the truths which He has revealed in order that we may worthily live in His service and love.

Live in the service of God. To do so we must participate in His own life, which is communicated to us by the grace of Jesus Christ. A new-born child is brought to the priest. The infant is alive indeed with the life of the earth, but he is as yet unborn to God. The priest is the dispenser of the divine life of faith; he baptizes the infant; a transformation is operated in that soul; it is marked for time and eternity with a stamp indicating that it has become a member of Christ's family and following. By the operation of God's minister the child is reborn to the kingdom of heaven.

When in later years that soul, by the suicidal act of mortal sin, has killed the divine life within it, the dispenser of the mysteries of God again intervenes to restore the dead soul. The man kneels before him in the Sacrament of Penance. The priest says: "I absolve thee" in the name of the blessed Trinity. As Lazarus in his sepulchre heard the voice of the Master, so the dead soul feels once more the life of grace within it; it comes forth from the sepulchre of everlasting death and lives again to God.

When the man approaches the term of his earthly journey, and is about to enter on the last dark struggle, the minister of God has another gift of divine mercy to impart for the occasion. He administers the Sacrament of Extreme Unction, to cleanse the soul and strengthen it for the passage, and in the name of God he bids it set forth in holy hope to meet its Redeemer and its Judge: "Go forth, Christian soul."

Finally, the supreme gift of God, which He bestows on us by the hands of His minister, is not merely His grace, but Himself, the author of grace. Here He reaches, as it were, the utmost that His mercy can perform. The priest, in His name, places on our tongue the living Bread that came down from heaven; the Body and Blood of the Saviour to be the food of our souls here and the pledge of immortality. "He that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood hath life everlasting, and I will raise him up on the last day" (John vi, 55). And having given us, through the priest, this final gift He may say to us: "What more could I have done for you that I have not done?"

III. Besides the order of the priesthood there are, as you know, other grades or orders, which, however, all relate to the priesthood and converge around it as their center. Each of them ordains the recipient to exercise some function that appertains to the eucharistic sacrifice. In what are called the minor orders, the porter is appointed to open and close, and see to the decency of the visible temple of wood and stone. The lector, or reader, prepares the invisible temples of souls by instructing them in the word of God, while the exorcist co-operates by banishing from them the spirits of evil. The acolyte is ordained to prepare the altar, light the candles and present the wine for the Sacrament. Then come the higher orders of subdeacon and deacon, who immediately assist the priest in the sacred mystery of the Mass, and in the distribution of Christ's Body and Blood to the faithful. Finally, we have the episcopate, the fulness of the priesthood, by which is imparted the power of perpetuating the priesthood of the New Law, in order that the sacrifice and the Sacraments instituted by our divine Saviour may continue in the Church till the end of time.

Thus, my dear brethren, by the Sacrament of Holy Orders there is constituted in the visible Church, around the eucharistic throne, an ordered hierarchy of persons, resembling the heavenly hierarchy of cherubim and seraphim, thrones and dominations, angels and

archangels, who serve and worship around the Eternal on high. And this earthly hierarchy mingles its voice with that of the celestial choirs, as the priest in the Mass, speaking for the entire Church, prays: "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of Sabaoth, heaven and earth are full of thy glory. Hosanna in the highest, blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord, Hosanna in the highest."

These considerations on the nature of Holy Orders enable us, my brethren, to understand more clearly the unity of the Church, the manner in which Jesus Christ is, not in a mere figure of speech, but in very truth, her head and her life by His living presence on the altar. We understand, too, from the nature of the priest's office what the holy sacrifice is in the worship of the Almighty; how, in the person of the priest, we all take part in that sublime action. And, therefore, in order to assist worthily at holy Mass, we, too, ought, as we enter the church door, leave behind us all thoughts of earth, all sinful attachments, that our hearts may be worthy of the immaculate Lamb which we are about to offer, and pleasing to the divine majesty to whom we present the priceless gift. Remembering the dignity of the priesthood, and that those on whom it has fallen are but poor, weak, sinful human beings like ourselves, we understand that it is our duty to help them by our prayers; to beg earnestly that God may sustain them by His grace against temptations of what kind soever, and enable them ever worthily and efficaciously to dispense to the souls intrusted to them gifts of God unto life everlasting. Amen.

## XXI. THE RELIGIOUS LIFE

BY THE RIGHT REV. JAMES BELLORD, D.D.

"In silence and in hope shall your strength be."—Isa. xxx, 5.

*SYNOPSIS.—In secrecy and silence the great sources of energy in the world lie hidden. Examples:*

*I. Mountain rivers derive their value and strength from the tiny rivulets. The vast army derives its victorious strength from the general who has planned and studied and guided all. The strength of Christ in His silence before His accusers; the power of the silent tabernacle.*

*II. God unites all source and activity of energy in Himself. In His creation these are separated. Mary and Martha are types of the Christian system. This is indicated by the vocation of the seven deacons.*

*III. The value of the active life; Its members, work, struggles, successes. The source of its strength is the prayer of some hidden soul or community of religious.*

*IV. The work of the religious orders. Its value, its weapon, its success. The great part played to-day by these prayerful communities in the work of salvation. Exhortation to the novice.*

I. How often it happens that the sources of the greatest energies remain deeply hidden in secrecy and silence! Some of the mightiest forces of nature that molded this world have eluded for thousands of years the piercing speculations of science; and when at length discovered, they have seemed so slow in operation, and so weak in a limited space, that we can hardly believe in the gigantic power they have exercised when multiplied and extended over long periods. A great river flows on almost imperceptibly, covering a continent with its tributaries and its convolutions, opening up the remote recesses of mountains and deserts, bearing fertility as it goes, and making the arid sands bloom with verdure and bear harvests that can nourish half the world. For many ages none had unveiled its secrets and looked upon the tiny rills that filled the great reservoirs which fed its eternal flow. Once more, over a wide country, innumerable soldiers press forward, and keep watch, and charge the foe. They obey orders coming they know not whence; they do not know their destination or the object of any one of their movements; they see nothing through the smoke of the battle beyond the muzzles of their guns. Leagues away in a quiet office an old man sits at a desk, pours over maps, scans docu-

ments, sends out his telegrams. A great victory is won, thousands are slain, the destiny of empires is changed. It is the distant solitary man who has fought and won that battle.

Strength is ever silent. The strongest determination of the will is the most quiet. None reaches from end to end so mightily as He who ordereth all things sweetly (Wisd. viii, 1). The working of God is very slow, very gradual, very secret, and almost imperceptible; but it is irresistible. God seems to yield like the air, but He carries all before Him like the storm. Never were the strength and majesty of Jesus Christ so manifest as when He stood alone, manacled, silent, powerless, before His accusers and judges. His lifeless Body on the Cross, crushed, shamed and abandoned, is the strength of the glorious undying Church, our only hope, the source of eternal life. That silent Presence in the lowly tabernacles of our Churches is the power of God, which can draw all things unto Himself, is our bulwark against all foes, our encouragement when we are tempted to despond at the sight of the forces of hell arrayed against us.

II. In God are combined the two things—the source of all energy, and the action which employs it; but when He makes us participate in his indivisible attributes in the form of virtues and functions in His service, they are in a manner broken up and divided among us according to our aptitude and vocations. "It is one man that soweth, and it is another that reapeth" (John iv, 37). "There are diversities of graces, . . . diversities of ministers, . . . diversities of operations, but the same God, who worketh all in all. . . . All these things one and the same spirit worketh, dividing to everyone according as he will" (I Cor. xii, 4-6, 11). In the spiritual body one represents the external function of muscle, another the unseen but more necessary function of the blood. One is the head, another is the heart, another is the arm. The vocation of some is to ascend the mountain with Moses, and pray with outstretched arms to the Lord of Hosts, while others are fighting in the valley below, overthrowing the Amalekites by the power which that prayer has gained for them. In the Church of God there are two great divisions; those who elicit and those who apply the divine energy; those who beseech the face of the Lord and move Him to mercy and the manifestation of His power, and those others who are instruments of that power and channels of that mercy. There have been some great saints who by a special

grace have fulfilled both duties, who have been men of action and men of prayer, who have been absorbed in contemplation of God while engaged in external occupations. Their action and their prayer were each adequate to the other. The graces which made their enormous labors fruitful they themselves impetrated from God. But the bulk of God's servants have to make a division of labor, or of their own time; they can not do both duties for themselves, at least not at the same time. Those who would contemplate God, and refresh their souls by union with Him, and gain strength for their work, can not, like some saints, find this repose in the midst of the tumult of life, but must cease their labors and retire for a while into solitude. Those who work, even when it is for God, out in the crowded world, necessarily lose the tranquillity of soul, the habit of recollection, the spirit of prayer, which are necessary for the higher union of the soul with God. Two kinds of vocation, then, are required for the completeness of the Church, and for her full development on both lines. Each is the complement of the other. The active element would work vainly all the night through and take nothing, unless stimulated by the prayers of others. The contemplative element, if isolated, would heap up to itself barren merits; barren, that is, in the sense that there would be no overflow to fertilize the broad fields and help on the harvest.

The division of spiritual labor between the two branches of life is of the very essence of the Christian system. Mary and Martha are the Gospel emblems of it. It was partially indicated when the Apostles appointed the seven deacons for administrative work, saying, "We will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word" (Acts vi, 4). From those days the religious life was observed substantially, although without a common rule, by those who were called Ascetics; and these were succeeded by the hermits of the deserts, and then by the regular monastic system, which have gone on developing to the present time. This was no movement of transitory enthusiasm, no passing phase of religious development, as the expression is, no secondary growth from private devotion or public law, but it is an essential element of the religion of Jesus Christ. The active and the contemplative life are two great stems entwined together, equally conveying the sap and vigor to the branches, and giving birth to the flowers and the fruit.

III. The active life has most prominence and visible glory. This

is the life of the Apostle, the prophet, the martyr, the confessor. Their work is patent to all. They can see what they are doing, and can trace some of the results of their labors, even although part of the harvest they have sown may be garnered by other hands. They are in the thick of the conflict with the devil, the world and the flesh. They have to bear the reverses and defeats; and to their energy is atributed the success. They bear the reproach and ignominy of Christ, and they triumph visibly with Christ. Their hands open the gates of heaven by Baptism; they receive the wandering sheep, dry their tears and lead them into the fold. It is theirs to instruct, reprove, advise, comfort, bless. They, with the guardian angels, help in the final struggle of the death-bed. It is they who are "ministers of Christ and dispensers of the mysteries of God" (I Cor. iv, 1). Their work varies in every place and every age. Their hands must be ready for whatever new, or strange, or difficult duty the needs of souls or the will of God point out. At times they are called upon for some heroic act of self-sacrifice, some sudden decision in a doubtful but most important matter; or they have to resist courageously with none to encourage, to run some grave risk, perchance to lay down their life for Christ. In such supreme moments they become vividly conscious of a sudden influx of strengthening and guiding grace from a source outside themselves. They are stricken with wonder at their own success, their endurance, their prudence, their strength; they feel keenly that they are but dead, incapable instruments in the hands of God; and the inquiry rises to the lips: What holy servant of God has prayed for this result? From what hidden corner of the world has come the force that has acted through me?

This strength has come from "the silence and the hope" of those to whom it is not given to join openly in the contest. Some humble servant of God, living in quiet retirement, leading what men think a useless, because an inactive, life, a life of suffering and prayer, such a soul calls down the grace of God from heaven on those who are working energetically in the vineyard, and helps them to work with fruit. None can know, nor will know till the day of judgment, how much of the successes of apostolic men is due to the prayers of those who bore no visible part in that glorious work. The conversion of a country may have been perhaps chiefly effected by the watchings and prayers of a religious order. The martyr may share his palm branch and crown with some invalid whose

patience has helped him to persevere to the end. During a silent visit to the most holy Sacrament, the contest in some unknown soul between light and darkness may be decided by a sudden ray of grace. The fervent prayers and Communions of one congregation may baffle some schemes of crafty men against the vicar of Christ. An ejaculation may cause some dying man to resist a fatal temptation. At the last day we shall witness a reassignment of merits for work done which will surprise us greatly. Then some who have gained great renown for successful labors may find that they were mere instruments, with little merit, of the intercession of others; while those who have prayed patiently in silence and hope, seeing no result, but leaving all in the hands of God, will perhaps have the reward of great and noble deeds performed by others. They will go into heaven surrounded by numerous souls strengthened, converted and saved by their prayers.

IV. In this kind of work for God possibilities are unbounded. All might take it up who are not engaged in the actual salvation of souls, and so get a share in that most blessed work. Many lives that are desolate and impassable as the wilderness, might be made to flourish like the lily, and bud forth and blossom like Carmel and Sharon (Is. xxxv, 1). But of necessity, this work develops especially on religious communities. From these centers of prayer the life blood of the Christian body is urged throbbing through all its veins. Religious are withdrawn from the dissipation of anxieties and the defilements of the world, into a region of calm where union with God can flourish. Their rule furnishes them with those two wings by which the soul soars upward to God, prayer and mortification. Their spiritual duties, their regularity of life, their recollection, foster the state of continual prayer. Their abandonment of earthly ties, renunciation of self by obedience, their life of poverty and austerity, constitute that death to nature which mortification aims at. Their work may be limited in kind and may bind them to one small spot; it may be of corporal mercy only, and so may seem inadequate to their longings for a higher and more directly spiritual work. But "laborare est orare"; their work is so directed that it is virtually prayer and self-abnegation, and like these, its effects extend much farther than the spot where the work is done. Thus, although religious are not without a share in active work, and although they in part belong to those who apply the divine energies to action, yet their more important work is that of eliciting those

divine energies from God for use in the work of others. Their connection with the contemplative section of God's servants is closer than with the active.

One of the best hopes we have at the present day (and hopeful prospects are few) is in the number, and excellence, and fervor, of religious communities. Their condition has fluctuated at various epochs; but in these days they recall the fervor of the early Christians. While the world is sinking deeper into wickedness, while hostility to the name of Christ is growing more diabolically bitter day by day, while the agents of Satan have succeeded in many quarters in checking the religious life and look forward to extinguishing it, in other directions we see an extraordinary outburst of this life. Vocations abound, new openings are continually made, religious are in demand everywhere, they are ever extending their work, while they grow in fervored devotedness. The religious state in its present development has attained a wonderful and unexampled position in the world and in the Church. So much so, that if all signs of Christian life perished elsewhere, the orders of religious would alone suffice to vindicate the power of Christianity and the note of sanctity in the Church. This condition of things is of happy augury to us in these present days of darkness. The fact that God is making such provision for abundant aid of prayer shows that the time is at hand when apostolic work will be abundant and successful. It presages a time of great activity that the correlative of the active life should be making such progress. A great crisis is approaching, and who can say what it is? There is work of some kind in store for us and our successors; we must prepare, so that whatever it is, we may be ready to do our part. It may be the ending of this epoch and the construction of a new one, or it may be the rehabilitation of the present one. In any case it will be the vindication of Christ and the re-establishment of his royalty; and happy those who are worthy to have a share in it!*

You, dear sister, are this day taking up your part in this great work. You have taken your place for life in one of the great divisions of the army of Christ. Henceforth you are closely connected with the work of God in this world. You have joined the choir of holy virgins who serve, under the Queen of Heaven, round the throne of the spotless Lamb. By your prayers and good work you

*This discourse will be suitable at the reception of a novice, and in such case the following conclusion may be used.

will help in bringing other laborers to recruit the ranks of Apostles and prophets in gathering God's harvest; you will gain constancy and perseverance for the martyrs, those numerous, hidden and sorely tried martyrs to petty persecution for their faith; you will aid in enlightening the confessors and sanctifying them for their labor among souls. I pray that you may have a part in all the works of God on earth, in the merits of all the workers, and in the glory of all the saints.

# XXII. THE SACRAMENT OF MARRIAGE

BY THE REV. THOMAS J. GERRARD

## I. Its Institution and Purpose

"Wherefore a man shall leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they shall be two in one flesh."—Gen. ii.

*SYNOPSIS—Introduction.—The growing dissatisfaction concerning the relations of the marriage state, the growing opposition between the sexes, the growth in the number of divorces, are mostly due to the obscuration of the Catholic ideal. The first remedy is to propagate the Catholic doctrine that marriage is a true Sacrament and as such provides a remedy for the evils of the day.*

*I. Marriage founded in the law of nature. The man by himself insufficient for God's purpose. The need of a woman as complement. The coming together of Adam and Eve. The immediate end of marriage is to increase and multiply. Yet it has a wider significance. A figure of Christ and the Church. Its final end, therefore, is the population of heaven with souls. Conditions of this are unity and perpetuity of the bond. These are fostered by conjugal love.*

*II. The natural bond raised to a Sacrament. Three stages of marriage: Natural, Mosaic, Christian. The Sacrament is the remedy for the evils arising out of the merely natural contract. All the graces needful for this state conferred by the Sacrament. Development of doctrine concerning this Sacrament. Made explicit by reference to the figure of Christ and the Church.*

*III. The parties to the contract are ministers of the Sacrament. This signifies their mutual duties during the married state. The priest not the minister, but the witness.*

*Conclusion.—The absolute need of keeping the supernatural aspect of the case well before our minds. The supernatural character or seal remains as long as the marriage state itself. Only by this help can the difficulties of the state be overcome.*

One of the most remarkable phenomena of the social life of the new century is the movement among womankind for a readjustment of the relations between man and woman. The movement affects all spheres of life. It makes most noise in the sphere of politics. But as the affairs of the State have their root in the affairs of the family, it is to the family that we must look for the cause of the disturbance. There would seem to be something wrong with many of the current ideas concerning the relationship between husband and wife. The fact indeed is that in many quarters

the Catholic ideal of the great Sacrament of matrimony has become obscured. The protective love of the husband toward the wife has been changed into a tyrannical overlordship. The loving acquiescence in that protection on the part of the wife has been construed into a servile obedience. The outrage on both nature and grace has rendered the mutual life irksome beyond endurance, and consequently ideas have become prevalent which tell both against the sanctity of the marriage state and against the indissolubility of its bond. Let us see then what the Church has to say about this wondrous mystery.

The very institution of marriage has its reason in the weakness and insufficiency of man. God, although supremely happy in the company of His own blessed Trinity, had willed to exercise His love outside Himself. He had willed to produce a created world in which there should be one class of creatures bearing His own likeness. After separating the night from the day, and the land from the water, after making the fishes of the sea, the fowls of the air and the cattle of the earth, He made man to rule over the earth. He made man a reasonable being, capable of giving a reasonable service. But even with all the delights of that paradise of pleasure, with all his unimpaired intelligence and power of ordaining things for God's glory, man by himself was not enough for God's purpose. There were parts in God's great design which man by himself could not accomplish. He was wanting in both physical, mental and moral complements. So God said: "It is not good for man to be alone: let us make him a help like unto himself." So God cast Adam into a deep sleep, took a rib from his side from which He built a woman. And when God brought the woman to the man, then did Adam say: "This now is bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called woman because she was taken out of man. Wherefore a man shall leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife, and they shall be two in one flesh." Having been thus made for each other and united to each other, they then received the message of God as to the end for which all these things had been arranged. "Increase and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it."

The formation of Adam and Eve and their union in the matrimonial bond had, however, a very much wider significance than the mere multiplication of human beings and the replenishment of the earth. God, when He created them, had also in His mind His own

Incarnation and His Church. The institution of matrimony was to to be a kind of prophecy of His Incarnation and a figure of His Church. As Adam was made weak so that Eve might be given to him to be his strength, so the Son of God became weak, emptying Himself of Himself so that He might take upon Himself the form of a servant and, clothed in flesh, might accomplish the strong victory over sin and death. As Eve was taken from the side of Adam as he slept, and became the mother of all living, so was the Church taken from the side of Christ as He slept upon the Cross, and became for Him His chosen spouse, the Mother of all those to whom He had come to give life. The state of marriage, therefore, as reflected in the mysteries of the Incarnation and the Church is seen to have the high function not only of procreating human beings to replenish the earth, but also of training them in the higher life of grace and thus preparing them for the still higher life of glory. Christ came into the world solely to save sinners. The end of the Church is merely the salvation of souls. If, therefore, matrimony is a figure of the Incarnation and the Church, then its chief end is the population of heaven with immortal souls.

Seeing, then, that the chief end of matrimony is so high and noble, the means ordained for the accomplishment of that end must be proportionately high and noble. And so we find that nature has provided such means. These may be summed up in the two properties of marriage, its unity and its indissolubility. And if we would probe further into the mystery and find the common source of these properties of marriage we discern it in that all-attractive beauty of the state, conjugal love. The mere procreation of children could not possibly be the end of matrimony; for this could be done without the bond, without the unity, without the perpetuity, without the love. Manifestly then the chief reason for the institution of matrimony was the welfare of the offspring, not merely the existence of the offspring, but its growth and development, the promotion of all its interests. Therefore, it was that God so made man and woman that they should love each other, that they should foster that love and concentrate it on each other by excluding all other love of the same kind, that they should make it so strong and lasting that only death should be able to bring about a breach of the union.

All this points to the fact that the marriage bond is a law of nature. It is a mutual agreement by which a man and a woman give

themselves to each other until death, and this chiefly for the sake of the highest interest of the children which shall be born to them.

Its natural perfection, however, in course of time became corrupted. Impurity then, even as now, led to hardness of heart. Consequently Moses allowed divorce. The Pharisees, knowing this, brought it as an objection to Our Lord's teaching. Our Lord, however, was able to quote an earlier and more fundamental law. "Have ye not read that He who made man from the beginning, made them male and female? And He said: For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife, and they two shall be in one flesh." Moses had taken into consideration the hardness of their hearts and for the sake of preventing greater evils had permitted them to put away their wives. "But," Our Lord reminded them "from the beginning it was not so." In this, as in many other matters, God had a greater design in view. He desired to provide a remedy for all this irregular life by raising the natural state of marriage to a supernatural plane. Forbidding divorce and insisting on the essential unity and indissolubility of the marriage tie, Christ raised it to the dignity of a Sacrament. Thus it became a more perfect figure of the Incarnation and the Church. Through the union of the Godhead and the Manhood, Christ in His human nature was filled with all grace and knowledge compatible with His created nature. Through the union of Christ with the Church, the Church is sanctified as His one perfect and unspotted bride. So likewise through the union of man and woman in the Sacrament of matrimony, there is conferred on them all the graces needful to enable them to carry out the arduous duties of that state. "Husbands," says St. Paul, "love your wives, as Christ also loved the Church, and delivered Himself up for it, that He might sanctify it, cleansing it by the laver of water in the word of life. . . . So also ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself. This is a great Sacrament; but I speak in Christ and in the Church."

When St. Paul speaks of marriage being a great Sacrament he does not use the word in the strict sense in which we use it now. He means merely that it is a great sign of something sacred, a mystical symbol of the union between Christ and His Church. Nevertheless on account of the similarity of the marriage bond to the bond between Christ and His Church, we are able to gather that marriage is a Sacrament in the strictest sense of the word. The union between

Christ and His Church consists of sanctifying grace. It consists further of a continual flow of all those graces which are needful for attaining the Church's end, namely the salvation of all the souls for whom the Church was instituted. If, therefore, the marriage bond is like the bond between Christ and His Church, it must be the means by which graces sanctifying the marriage state are conferred. A Sacrament of the new law is a sacred sign instituted by Christ to signify and to confer grace. If, therefore, the marriage bond signifies and confers the graces needful for the marriage state, and if instituted by Christ, then it is one of the seven Sacraments of the new law. So it was then that Christ placed His divine seal on the natural contract and with His own lips proclaimed it henceforth to be a bond forged in heaven. "What, therefore, God hath joined together let no man put asunder."

From the fact that Christ raised the natural contract into a Sacrament, it follows that the parties to the contract are the ministers of the Sacrament. It is the man and woman who hand themselves over to each other making a mutual contract to live together till death. It is the man and woman, therefore, who confer on each other the Sacrament enabling them to fulfil the higher duties which are involved in the Christian married state. The priest is not the minister of the Sacrament, but only the witness of it. Our late Holy Father, Pope Leo XIII, emphasized this when he insisted that the contract and the Sacrament were not two separate things. "The distinction, or rather separation," he said, "can not be approved of; since it is clear that in Christian matrimony the contract is not separable from the Sacrament, and consequently that a true and lawful contract can not exist without being by that very fact a Sacrament. For Christ Our Lord endowed matrimony with the Sacramental dignity; but matrimony is the contract itself, provided that the contract is rightly made. . . . Therefore, it is plain that every true marriage among Christians is in itself and by itself a Sacrament; and that nothing is further from the truth than that the Sacrament is a sort of added ornament or quality introduced from without, which may be detached from the contract at the discretion of man."* If, therefore, the Sacrament is the mutual contract, it is the woman, who, as God's minister, confers on the man those soul beauties which make him a figure of Christ, the bridegroom of the Church; and so likewise is it the man who, as God's minister, con-

*Leo XIII, Encyc. *Arcanum.*

fers on the woman those soul beauties, which make her a figure of the Church, the bride of Christ. Husband and wife are thus seen to be the complement of each other in their supernatural, as well as in their natural, relationships.

It is well to keep this supernatural aspect of the case prominently before our minds when we consider the duties and obligations of the state. The end for which marriage was instituted was a most difficult end to attain. Indeed it were an impossible task without the special divine helps provided. Remembering these helps, however, the married couple may face their difficulties with a good heart. The sacramental effect of matrimony does not spend itself out within a week or two of the nuptial ceremony. The grace conferred on the wedding morning remains with them when they leave the church, remains with them in their home life, fortifies them in their discouragements and steels their wills to the emergencies of every difficult situation. The Church then, having made this clear to them, sets aside all false modesty and tells them in grave and plain language what their duties are. The first duty is the bringing of children into the world and the educating of them in the service of God; the second duty is mutual love and service in the companionship of domestic life. In the nuptial Mass the priest solemnly prays over them that they may be fruitful in their offspring and that they may see their children's children unto the third and fourth generation. And, finally, in his exhortation he warns them to be faithful to each other, and to remain chaste at special times of prayer, during the fasts and solemn seasons of the Church. Now all this involves much trouble and anxiety both on the part of the husband and of the wife. With the former lies the paramount obligation of working for the sustenance of the household; with the latter lies all the cares of child-bearing; with both lies that anxiety for the temporal and spiritual well-being of each other and of the children. "But if thou take a wife," says St. Paul, "thou hast not sinned. But if a virgin marry, she hath not sinned; nevertheless, such shall have tribulation of the flesh." Those who enter this state, therefore, should do so with their eyes wide open to the fact that it is a life fraught with difficulty and that both man and woman are supposed to be willing to bear grave inconveniences. When a man complains of his loss of liberty or the increased burden on his pocket; or when a woman complains of the troubles of children, there has evidently been some radical misunderstanding as to the

end of the institution of marriage and of its burdens. What is needed on those occasions is the consideration that marriage is a Sacrament, a Sacrament which is a channel of divine strength to bear the burden, of divine light to see the way out of the difficulties, of divine refreshment for the constant renewal of conjugal life and love.

# XXIII. THE SACRAMENT OF MARRIAGE

BY THE REV. THOMAS J. GERRARD

## II. Its Sanctity

"What, therefore, God hath joined together let no man put asunder."—Matt. xix, 6.

*SYNOPSIS.—Introduction.—Having regard to the high end of marriage, it must have qualities fitted for that end. These are unity and perpetuity. The labor of bringing children to perfection, spiritually and mentally, as well as physically, require the undivided and life-long love of both parents. The ideal family love is the triple love of husband, wife and child. Has its archtype in the Blessed Trinity. It can brook no instrusion from without, nor bear the prospect of coming to an end. All this emphasized, strengthened and sanctioned by the marriage Sacrament.*

*I. The Unity of the Marriage State.—Natural charms no guarantee of undivided and perpetual love. The passing away of natural youth requires that there should be a persistency of spiritual youth. This is provided by the Sacrament. Adultery forbidden. Polygamy forbidden. The polygamy of the Jews explained. But unity always retained as the ideal thing. Song of songs. Example of Tobias. Church permits remarriage after death of one of the partners, but even this is not according to her ideal.*

*II. The perpetuity of the marriage state. Divorce. Need of clear distinction between (1) judicial separation, (2) divorce, (3) declaration of nullity. Judicial separation under certain conditions allowed by the Church, but divorce never. The declaration of nullity exemplified in the case of a Jew who obtains a "juridical" divorce, becomes a Catholic and gets married according to the Catholic rite.*

*III. Seeming exceptions to the rule. Matrimonium ratum et non consummatum. Within these limitations the Church is inexorable. The case of Henry VIII. Encyclical of Leo XIII.*

*Conclusion.—Views subversive of the Catholic ideal very prevalent. Catholics need to insist on their ideal. It is the only hope for the salvation of the world. They may admit that there are difficulties attached to the state, but no difficulty without its corresponding grace. And even so the difficulties of matrimony nothing compared with the evils of divorce. The remedy for all is respect for the Sacrament.*

It is part of God's providence that when He sets before us an end to be attained He provides us also with the means of attaining that end. So in the case of marriage, having ordained it for the high purpose of preparing souls for heaven, God has endowed it with qualities which make it an apt instrument for the purpose for which it was instituted. These qualities are revealed in the truth of Christ and the Church. Christ's Church was to be one only, and

it was to last until the end of time. The bond of Christian marriage must likewise be one only and must last until broken by death. Unity and perpetuity are the qualities which make the marriage state specially fitted for the great object of bringing children into the world, of nourishing them in body, mind and spirit, of bringing them to the final perfection for which man was created. If the bringing of children into the world is attended with great pain and labor, the bringing of their souls to perfection is attended with still greater pain and labor. It requires nothing else than the united life and love of both parents. Now such is the nature of man and woman that they can not love effectually with a divided love. Let either partner give the other the slightest cause for jealousy and there is an end of that perfect love and harmony in the family which is so needful for the well-being of the children. The archtype of perfect love is the mutual love of the three persons of the blessed Trinity. One of the fairest created reflections of that love is the triple love of family life, the love of husband, wife and child. It will brook no intrusion from without. It can not bear the prospect of it coming to an end. This is a fundamental and universal law of nature, a law of nature which is accentuated, ennobled and made perfect by a law of grace. The Sacrament of Matrimony implies a special divine sanction to the laws of unity and perpetuity in the marriage bond.

The need of the higher sanction and help is seen from the passing nature of the merely natural charms. The mere physical pleasures pass away with their satisfaction. Youthful ardor burns out before the mature part of life is reached. In the course of a life so intimate as that of husband and wife many faults of character become exposed. Marriage certainly brings a revelation of many new beauties of character, but it also brings a revelation of many faults of character. It is fraught with disappointments even as with agreeable surprise. The fading of bodily beauty also tends to weaken the natural bond. When the hair turns gray, and the eye loses its luster, and the features fall into wrinkles; when the general buoyancy and ardor of youth tones down into the prose of middle age; then indeed is there need of something more sustaining, something more lasting than the mere tie of natural affection or natural contract. It is found in the unity and perpetuity of the Sacrament. The Sacrament imparts all the courage, the energy, the refreshment and the love needful to make the bond

strong and lasting. It renews the youth of married life and makes it satisfying even in spite of years.

The Church claims to have the care of this Sacrament. The Church, therefore, has ever insisted on its unity and perpetuity. The Church regards the sin of adultery as something infinitely more heinous than any sin possible among the unmarried. The father who has to provide for his children must be certain that they are his own. He cares for them only on the supposition that they are his offspring. Any infidelity, therefore, on the part of the woman must of necessity tend to break up these sacred family relationships. A father can not love and care for children who may be those of the man who has done him the greatest possible injury. And if a woman gives unswerving fidelity to her husband she has a right to claim an equal fidelity in return. Infidelity on the part of the man, although it does not act directly in rendering the offspring of the family uncertain, yet it strikes at the root of conjugal love, and thus almost directly at the foundations of family life. A violation of the sanctity of marriage then by either party is a double violation of God's law, a violation of chastity and a violation of justice. Hence, we have the most stringent laws against adultery, against polygamy and against divorce.

Among the Jews the penalty of adultery was death by stoning. In the most savage races of the earth its punishment is immediate death. The law of Christ makes the law of nature and the law of Moses more perfect. This it does by all the conditions and rules which it lays down for the prevention of polygamy and divorce. By polygamy we usually understand the possession of two wives at the same time. The possession of two husbands at the same time is known as polyandry. Both are equally condemned by the Christian law. The cases of polygamy among the Jews are frequently quoted by those who want an excuse for disregarding the laws of Christian marriage. Attention must be paid to the circumstances of time and race. If polygamy was permitted then it was for a special reason. And the permission was mere toleration. The circumstances of the times required that it should be permitted in order to avoid greater evils. Nevertheless, God did not cease to give signs to His people as to what was the great ideal. The most wondrous love song ever sung by man was that inspired by the Holy Spirit, the song of songs which tells of the love between one bridegroom and one bride, the love which lasts till death.

"One is my dove, my perfect one is but one. . . . I to my beloved and my beloved to me, who feedest among the anemones. . . . Put me as a seal upon thy heart, as a seal upon thy arm, for love is strong as death, jealousy as hard as hell, the lamps thereof are fire and flames. . . . My beloved to me and I to him who feedeth among the lilies, till the day break and the shadows flee away." So the young Tobias could say to his wife Sara: "For we are the children of saints, and we must not be joined together like heathens that know not God." In praying to God for a blessing on his marriage he referred back to its original conditions: "Thou madest Adam of the slime of the earth, and gavest him Eve for a helper. And now Lord thou knowest that not for fleshly lust do I take my sister to wife, but only for the love of posterity, in which thy name may be blessed for ever and ever." And Sara prayed with him: "Have mercy on us, and let us grow old both together in health."

Further, the Church, although she insists that the marriage bond lasts only till death, although she allows remarriage after the death of one of the partners, yet she looks upon such remarriage as something less perfect. Her ideal is that a marriage should be so distinctly one and perpetual as to exclude any other marriage even after the first has been dissolved by death. A marriage is not merely a union of two in one flesh, but also of two in one spirit. The more perfect thing, therefore, would be to consider the bond of love lasting right through death. The reason why the Church allows remarriage after the death of one of the partners is because there are other ends of matrimony besides mutual love. To give expression to her wish, however, and to mark the distinction between the more perfect state and the less perfect state, the Church does not give the nuptial blessing in cases where the bride is a widow. She gives it where the bride is being married for the first time, even though the bridegroom be a widower. Having regard to the dignity of the bride, the Church in this case overlooks the defect in the bridegroom. Her end is achieved by withholding the blessing only in the case of the marriage of widows. She wishes to hold up an ideal, to emphasize the unity and perpetuity of the bond.

This brings us to the all-important question of divorce. If both the natural and divine laws maintain the unity and perpetuity of the marriage bond, then no power on earth, not even the Church, has power to grant a divorce. "What, therefore, God hath joined

together let no man put asunder." Here, on the threshold of the question it is necessary to make a clear distinction of terms. When it is said that no power on earth can grant a divorce, divorce must be understood in a particular and strict sense of the word. Let us distinguish then between three kinds of separation. First, there is a separation which implies that the husband and wife are allowed to live apart. It is called in juridical language a judicial separation. It is called in theological language *separatio a mensa et thoro,* or separation from bed and board. Its meaning is that although the parties are separated from each other, yet they are not free to marry again. If they were allowed to marry again the separation would be said to be *a vinculo,* or separation from the bond. The actual contract or tie would be broken. Now the first kind of separation is allowed by the Church whenever there is a grave reason, such, for instance, as the misconduct of one of the parties. But the second kind the Church allows never. The bond which has been made by God may not be broken by man. One of the parties may forfeit certain rights of marriage through infidelity to the partner, but can never thereby acquire the freedom to marry again. And further, the Church makes no distinction in this respect between the innocent party and the guilty. A bond is a bond, the contract is a two-sided one, and, therefore, as long as the bond or contract remains it must bind both the parties. However unfair it may seem to the innocent party, yet it is God's law and God will see to it that those who observe His law will, in the final balancing, receive their just reward.

Then there is another kind of separation which is frequently believed to be a divorce and which is a source of much perplexity to Catholics and non-Catholics alike. It is called a declaration of nullity. It means that that which has appeared to be a marriage is declared never to have been a marriage from the beginning. The parties have gone through the ceremony, but there has been some obstruction in the way which has prevented the knot from being tied and so the supposed marriage must be declared null and void. Let us take an instance. A certain Jew married to a Jewish wife seeks for a divorce in the law courts. He is successful in his suit. Then he becomes a Catholic, falls in love with a Catholic girl, and wishes to be married to her in the Catholic Church. There is no difficulty, the Church approves of the marriage. What has happened? The undiscerning public think that the Church has ap-

proved of divorce and of the remarriage of a divorced person. And if the man happens to have been a wealthy Jew the undiscerning public is not slow to attribute unworthy motives to the Church. But again, what has really happened? The Jew's first marriage was really no marriage at all in the sight of the Church. Baptism is the first Sacrament and the door of the other Sacrament. The Jew had not received the Sacrament of Baptism and so was incapable of receiving the Sacrament of Marriage. And being incapable of receiving the Sacrament of Marriage he was incapable of making the contract of marriage, for the Sacrament is the contract. Therefore, the marriage which, by the law of the land, was declared to be dissolved was by the law of the Church declared never to have existed, to have been null and void from the beginning. Consequently, when the Jew became a Catholic and received the Sacrament of Baptism he was quite free and capable of uniting himself with the partner of his choice.

Again, there are cases in history where the Church had sanctioned the dissolution of the actual bond of matrimony, the peculiar circumstances of which must be clearly understood. It can only take place when the marriage has been merely ratified and not consummated. That means that the church ceremony has been performed, but the two have not yet become one flesh. In such circumstances the Church teaches that either of the parties may enter religion and take a solemn vow of chastity. By a divine dispensation the solemn vow of chastity renders the marriage bond dissolved, and the party who does not take the vow is free to marry again.

Within these limitations the Church is absolutely inexorable against any attempt at separation from the bond. She has suffered the loss of whole nations from the faith rather than sacrifice one jot or tittle of her principle. The care of the Sacrament has been committed to her keeping, and to have condoned a denial of the sacramental nature of the matrimonial bond, even in one case, would have been to renounce the divine charge given to her. For the English-speaking world the Pope's firmness, in refusing to grant a divorce to Henry VIII, must ever be a monument of the fidelity of the Church to the sanctity of the marriage state. And the famous Encyclical of the late Sovereign Pontiff, Leo XIII, must ever remain the character of woman's dignity and safety as to her marriage right. "The great evils," wrote the Pontiff, "of which divorce is the spring can hardly be enumerated. When the conjugal bond

loses its immutability we may expect to see benevolence and affection destroyed between husband and wife; an encouragement given to infidelity; the protection and education of children rendered more difficult; the germs of discord sown between families; woman's dignity disowned; the danger for her of seeing herself forsaken, after having served as the instrument of man's passions. And as nothing ruins families and destroys the most powerful kingdoms like the corruption of manners, it is easy to see that divorce, which is only begotten of the depraved manners of a people, is the worst enemy of families and of States, and that it opens the door, as experience attests, to the most vicious habits, both in private and in public life."

Views subversive of the Catholic ideal are now very prevalent, and are becoming day by day more prevalent. In the matter of the sanctity of marriage, as in many other things, it is the Catholics who are the salt of the earth. Whilst other religious bodies are prepared to give way under any specious pretext which may arise, the See of Peter proclaims the principle of no compromise. And when the Churches which ought to guard the sanctity of marriage show themselves weak and accommodating to the lower pleasures of man, we must not be surprised if non-religious bodies speak openly in favor of divorce and, all unashamed, make profession of free love. This, indeed, has come to pass. High time is it then for Catholics to make their voice heard in protest. Nay, absolutely imperative is it that Catholics should rally themselves anew with even greater loyalty around the Holy Father who watches the marriage Sacrament so anxiously and sees its dangers so clearly. Legislation is made which may be irksome; but the irksomeness thereby suffered is trifling compared with the irksomeness thereby avoided. Let us admit boldly that the marriage state is fraught with difficulties, that love is liable to grow cold, that child-bearing is a burden, that the education of many children is a tax on the family's resources, that a drunken husband is an almost intolerable nuisance, that a gossiping wife is a plague of a life; let us admit all this, but at the same time insist that the Sacrament of Marriage has power either to prevent or mitigate the evils. It restrains the passions. But let the idea of divorce once get established and there is an end of restraint. The passions are let loose and fall victim to every little counter-attraction to family life. The half-hearted partner who realizes that there is an easy escape from the burden

of married life makes no serious attempt to bear it. Then comes the sad spectacle of a mother left alone with a house full of children and no father to provide for them; or what is perhaps even more sad, a father with a house full of children and no mother to take care of them. The Church's laws may be hard to bear at times. They are, however, as the yoke of Christ, sweet and easy to bear if only we spread them out over the short run of life.

# XXIV. THE SACRAMENT OF MARRIAGE

BY THE REV. THOMAS J. GERRARD

## III. Espousals

"This is a great Sacrament; but I speak in Christ and in the Church."—Eph. v, 32.

*SYNOPSIS.—Introduction.—The time of company-keeping is a preparation for a great Sacrament. Courtship can be carried on according to the rules of the Christian life, and at the same time retain all its joy and romance. It is an affair of both head and heart, of reason, will and affection.*

*I. The rules of the Church. Church is guardian of the Sacraments, and, therefore, has the right to say under what condition marriage may be contracted. The value of both parties being of the same religion. Proclamation of banns. Consent of parents. Prohibited times. Freedom from other engagements. Recent legislation regarding sponsalia. Vows. The difference between impedient and diriment impediments. Two chief diriment impediments: affinity and consanguinity.*

*II. The rules of common sense. Character and virtue. Honesty and sobriety in the man, chastity in the woman. Compatibility of temper. Health. Age, social standing and wealth. Passion and personal beauty.*

*Conclusion.—Law and limitation in the matter of choice all designed to insure a greater freedom and a more lasting love.*

That was a naive answer given by the little Irish girl. Asked by the priest what was the way of preparing for the Sacrament of Matrimony, she replied: "A little courting, your reverence." The truth thereby unconsciously spoken needs to be well spread abroad in these days. Courting time is a preparation for a great Sacrament. In speaking of this, even as of all other phases of Christian life, there is need of much common sense. On the one hand the young people who have arrived at this interesting stage may be expected to take it seriously, but on the other hand they must not be expected to deport themselves as if they were preparing for a funeral. Company keeping is one of the happiest times of life, and if it is not attended with joy and brightness there is something wrong somewhere. At the outset then let it be known to all parents that there is nothing sinful in their grown up children looking for partners. Let it be known to all nuns that there is nothing wrong in big children of Mary speaking to the young men of the congrega-

tion. Let it be known to all young men and all young maidens that the affairs of courtship is not something to be ashamed of. Of its nature it involves a certain amount of modesty and shyness. Still from its earliest signs and movements it is something which ought to be perfectly above board, known to father and mother, acknowledged in the presence of the family. It is a preparation for a great Sacrament, and its verve and joy and delight can suffer no loss through being regulated by the claims of religion.

Now, although falling in love is something which ought to be controlled by reason, it is not entirely an affair of the reason. It is primarily an affair of the heart. If only such marriages took place as were the result of clear reasoning and mere reasoning from beginning to end, this would become a very dull and uninteresting world, and we might indeed have grave fears for the survival of our race. But in addition to reason, God has given man and woman affection and love. The affection and the love have reason to guide them, but their action depends largely on their object. The light of intellect in the man can not make a woman's face look more beautiful. The light of intellect in a woman can not make a man's form look more handsome. A case of real love between a man and woman is beyond adequate explanation. A man may love a woman for her good looks, for her domestic virtues, for her intellectual endowments; but the kind of love she likes best is that when he is obliged to say: "I do not know why I like you, I only know that I do." So the problem to be solved by all young Catholics is this: How are the claims of this mysterious and inexplicable love and affection to be reconciled with the claims of stern reason and sublime religion? Let it not be supposed that these rival claims are incompatible with each other. They all come from one and the same Author, and so it is only a question of adjustment. In order to make this adjustment then both parents and children should know what are the rules of the Church and what are the rules of right reason. With this double guiding light the young people may then frequent such places and cultivate such company as shall be likely to afford a fitting environment for the passion of love when it makes its appearance.

The rules of the Church come first. Marriage is a great Sacrament, and the Church, having the guardianship of all the Sacraments, claims the right to say what is the best preparation for marriage and what are the conditions under which it may be con-

tracted. She has a right to say what conditions affect the validity, and what conditions affect the lawfulness of the contract. The contract is the Sacrament, and, therefore, only the Church can say what impediments render the contract unlawful and what impediments render the contract null and void. They will all be found to be eminently practical and possessed of a special aptitude to foster that pure and passionate love which the young people value so highly.

The first qualification that a Catholic would look for in a partner for life would be that the partner should also be a Catholic. Mere acquaintances feel that they have a common and lasting bond between them if they are both Catholics. This feeling must be indefinitely intensified between two who are to live together in the intimate life of holy matrimony. Indeed the advantages of such a condition, together with the evil consequences following upon the neglect of it, need a separate treatment. It will be sufficient here to say that the Church regards the matter as of the most vital importance. The impediment is classified with two others under the title of "Prohibition of the Church." These two also will recommend themselves as obviously conducive to the safe-guarding of the Sacrament. The one is the proclamation of the banns, by which each party is protected against possible fraud or mistake. The other is that which requires the consent of parents. It is part of the solemn duty of parents to watch over the children in an affair of great consequence. And indeed parents, especially the mother, do watch their children most anxiously. The law of nature compels it, the law of the Church sanctions it. With reason then does the Church oblige children to consult their parents in the matter. Of course cases may and do arise in which the consent of the parents is unjustly held back. Some parents out of mere selfish love dislike to lose their children and act all regardless of the divine ordinance that for the sake of matrimony a man shall leave his father and mother. In case of dispute, however, the children will not go against the wishes of their parents without first consulting their confessor.

Again, since the Church regards marriage as a great Sacrament, she encourages her children to celebrate it with great pomp and festive joy. It happens as a rule only once in a lifetime and, therefore, is most fittingly accompanied with banquet and merry-making. All these things, however, would manifestly be out of place during

times set about for the more solemn religious exercises. The Church ordains, therefore, that marriages shall be discouraged during the seasons of Advent and Lent; in Advent until the feast of the Epiphany, in Lent until Low Sunday inclusive. A marriage may, however, be permitted during these times, but it must be celebrated without any of that external display which would otherwise be so fitting on such an occasion.

A third condition for a lawful marriage is that neither party shall be engaged to any one else. There are three points of view from which a previous engagement must be regarded. It has a personal aspect, a legal aspect and an ecclesiastical aspect. No man of honor will enter into a new engagement until he has been formally released from any previous engagement in which he may have become involved. It would, perhaps, be needless to say that he ought not to make serious overtures to another partner until he has been released by the first; for, oftener than otherwise, it is the appearance of a new face which is the cause of dissatisfaction with the old one. A man in such a predicament owes it both to himself, to his previous partner and to his prospective partner to arrange an honorable settlement as soon as possible. The claims of society demand that neither girl should be kept in a false position. The previous partner, too, may have legal rights to compensation for breach of promise. Then again there is the ecclesiastical aspect of the matter. The law has recently been changed, and henceforth only those engagements hold good in ecclesiastical law which have been made in writing, signed by both parties and signed by the parish priest or ordinary, or at least two witnesses. Of course couples may marry lawfully without such an agreement in writing, but without such an agreement the engagement will not be binding in conscience or produce any economical effects. It would produce a legal effect and a social effect; it would hold good in the eyes of the law of the country and in the eyes of all respectable society. Nay more, although there would be no obligation to marry, although the espousals were invalid through want of proper formality, still those invalid espousals would render a person liable to all due restitution or damages just as if they were valid. Thus the Church protects the weaker party in two ways. First, she gives the warning and protects young people against imprudent engagements, engagements entered into without deliberation and under circumstances when innocence and ignorance hinder the due con-

sideration of the dignity of the Sacrament. Secondly, she obliges the guilty party to make fitting restitution for all the material loss which the innocent party may have suffered in consequence.

Another impediment similar to that of previous betrothal is the impediment of vows. Obviously a vow to do one thing is a hindrance to the making of a vow to do something contrary. So rarely, however, does this impediment arise that it may be left for individual treatment. If there has been a vow of any kind, the matter should be mentioned to the confessor.

Further, there are a number of impediments which not only render a marriage unlawful and sinful, but also null and void. Let us clearly understand the difference between what is unlawful and what is invalid. If I burn down my neighbor's haystack, it is validly burnt down, for there is no haystack left; but it is unlawfully burnt down. My action is valid, but not lawful. If I shoot at my neighbor in the dark and miss him, my action is both unlawful and invalid. I have intended to take my neighbor's life, but have failed to do so. Likewise there may be certain attempts to get married which, on account of certain impediments, produce no effect. Such ceremonies are both unlawful and invalid. It is the duty of the priest to inquire whether there be any such impediments before he allows the celebration to take place. Most of them are so rare as not to need public treatment. When the banns are published the faithful are told that if they know of any impediment, either of consanguinity, affinity or spiritual relationship, they are bound to declare the same as soon as possible. The impediment of spiritual relationship is that which arises out of the Sacraments of Baptism and Confirmation. The chances of this relationship are reduced to a minimum by the custom of having a man as sponsor for the boys and a woman as sponsor for the girls. The two great diriment impediments, therefore, which need to be carefully watched by young people are the impediments of consanguinity and affinity. Consanguinity is the connection of blood relationship; affinity is the connection of relationship by marriage. The Church excludes marriages between persons who may be related to each other within certain degrees of relationship. She thus forbids marriage between first, second or third cousins; and also between a man and his deceased wife's sister. These are the more common cases in which difficulty arises and which need to be carefully guarded against. In some of them, of course, which are not involved in the

primary law of nature the Church may grant a dispensation. Nevertheless she regards them as evil, and only grants dispensations in order to prevent greater evils. The disastrous results of intermarriage are well known. It leads to deterioration of the race, to insanity, to physical deformity, and to a general weakening of the social bond. The Church, therefore, in setting her face against such marriages proves herself to be the friend and guardian of the temporal, as well as of the spiritual well-being of her people.

Now, although the Church is very strict in limiting the freedom of her children whenever it is for their good, yet at the same time she leaves much to their own individual judgment. Those who look forward to a happy marriage, therefore, must avail themselves of that freedom which the Church allows and use also their own sound judgment and common sense. In this sphere one can not lay down hard and fast rules. What is good in England may be bad in America; what is permissible in one degree of society may be inadvisable in another. The custom of the country or of the particular sphere of Catholic society is a point which must always be considered. Nevertheless a few general suggestions may be offered.

Character or virtue will be the first quality to be sought for in the choice of a mate. The predominant and essential virtues expected from the man are honesty and sobriety. These are especially manly virtues. In the natural order it is the sense of honor which will keep the husband faithful to his wife and insure for her that respect, care and protection to which she has a right. Sobriety, too, is absolutely necessary for the making of a happy home. The love may be there and the fidelity may be there, but they will be in constant peril if they are accompanied by drunkenness. And if drunkenness be a failing during the days of courtship, a reform after marriage can not be expected. The pity of it is that girls are only too eager to find excuses for a lover addicted to this failing. "Oh, but he is as quiet as a lamb when he is sober," pleaded once a young woman in one of our very poor missions. The only reliable advice to give to a girl with an intemperate sweetheart is to break off the engagement at once. The predominant virtue expected from the woman is chastity. This will be measured by the care which she takes in avoiding occasions of sin. Here it is not a question of having sinned grievously, but of a constant observance of all those habits of modesty, reticence, sobriety of language and gesture, and, above all, utmost decorum in all necessary intercourse with mem-

bers of the opposite sex. They are habits which can be observed and felt much more effectually than they can be described. In fact every Catholic girl knows them, and no one is so observant of and sensitive to them as the honorable young man who comes to pay court to her.

Next, compatibility of temper must be examined. It is easy to discern. Quarrels during time of courtship may be reasonably excused from time to time. The proverb that true love never runs smoothly implies that in the common estimation of mankind, lovers' quarrels are a part of the business of love-making among those who are not angels. But there are some lovers whose courtship seems to be one perpetual quarrel, one everlasting carping, jealous insinuation and complaint. Obviously such a life would only be accentuated in the marriage state, and the sooner the engagement is broken off the better for both parties.

The question of health, too, ought not to be overlooked. In earlier days the Church spoke more explicitly on the matter, though now she leaves it to the parties themselves to decide. The cases in which the difficulty most frequently arises are those of insanity and consumption. As a counsel of perfection it is well in such circumstances to abstain from matrimony. But where this abstention is fraught with moral danger, then the advice of a medical expert should be sought. Parents have a duty toward their prospective offspring as well as to themselves. The science of heredity is anything but an exact science. As for consumption, the treatment of it has now been so vastly improved that very many consumptive people may now marry without serious danger either to each other or to their offspring. Those, however, who contemplate such a marriage ought always to consult a specialist previously.

The questions of age, social standing and wealth may not be overlooked. Certainly many happy marriages have taken place between persons far removed from each other in age, fortune and position. These, however, are exceptions rather than the rule. A young person will not naturally seek a much older one with a view to matrimony. But the cases of those hunting after a larger fortune and higher position are only too frequent. And it is these who come to grief in married life.

Lastly, there is the question of passion and personal beauty. Let it be said at once that passion is not a bad thing in itself. It is only bad when it overrides reason. Let it be said, too, that beauty of

form and looks is not a thing in itself to be despised. The Church, in her office of virgins, applies to them the words of the psalmist: "With thy comeliness and thy beauty set out, proceed prosperously, and reign." So long as it is kept in due subordination to the gifts of character and virtue, then it may be prized for what it is worth. Only when opposed to the fear of God is beauty said to be vain and form fallacious.

The great principle to be kept before one's mind, therefore, in the choice of a mate, is that the Sacrament of marriage is not a crushing or a cramping of human nature, but a perfecting and realizing of it. If limits have been placed by the law of God, by the law of the Church, by the law of reason, then those limitations of choice are the conditions of a wider and nobler freedom. If it seems hard to have one's choice limited to a partner of the same religion, remember that that law duly observed will be a safeguard against a multitude of more irksome limitations in the future. If it seems unfair to have one's choice limited to those who are not of blood relationship, remember that that law duly observed will probably mean salvation from some of the most horrible calamities which can befall the marriage state. If love seems to have limits set to it by reason, remember that those reasonable limits are the barriers which prevent love from degenerating into mere passion, and insure for it a strong and lasting endurance.

# XXV. THE SACRAMENT OF MARRIAGE

BY THE REV. THOMAS J. GERRARD

## IV. Mixed Marriages

"I beseech you, therefore, to be united in the Lord, so that you may walk worthily in the vocation wherewith you are called."—Eph. iv, 1.

*SYNOPSIS.—Introduction.—Mixed marriages are disapproved of by the Church as being far below her ideal. But they are tolerated in order to avoid greater evils. Their incongruity seen by comparison with mystic types.*

*I. They spoil God's ideal. Marriage likened to Christ and the Church, also to the union of the Father and Son. The union is, therefore, something far deeper than we can comprehend. As there is no difference of thought between Father and Son, or between Christ and the Church, so there should be no difference of belief between husband and wife. The chief obstacle to the realization of this in the interested parties is their love for each other. But further consideration will show that that love is of a low order which has not faith for its foundation. The faith provides a system of Sacraments and morality which fosters and strengthens the highest love. The Protestant can hardly avail himself of these.*

*II. Mixed marriages endanger the faith of the Catholic party. Such marriages are, therefore, only tolerated on the condition that the Catholic party shall be allowed free exercise of his or her religion. Even so the occasions of danger are numerous. Prevention better than cure.*

*III. Mixed marriages endanger the faith of the children. Chief end of marriage, the procreation and education of children for the kingdom of heaven. The child pertains to the ideal of the Sacrament and its mystic types. Importance of early impressions. Difference of faith in parents must tell on the character of the child. Such marriages only tolerated on condition that all the children, irrespective of sex, are to be brought up in the Catholic religion.*

*IV. The Church's care for the non-Catholic party. The nature and application of the third condition, that there must be a reasonable hope of conversion.*

*Conclusion.—Keep three things clear; (1) the ideal, (2) the reasons against mixed marriages, (3) the conditions under which they are tolerated.*

The Church, in her dispensation of the Sacraments, always acts as a good and kind mother. She has regard to the weakness, as well as to the strength, of her children. Her divine message is all beautiful. The ideal which she sets before her children is a perfect ideal. She ever emphasizes this ideal even though she knows that in many cases it will not be realized. She wishes her

children to conform to the ideal as nearly as possible. Consequently she condescends to them, and where in her wisdom she finds that the weak ones can not realize what she wishes, she allows, within certain limits, that which is less good. She knows that the Sacraments were made for men, not men for the Sacraments. She prefers then to administer the Sacraments with certain accidental imperfections rather than allow her children to go without the grace which the Sacraments convey. For this reason she tolerates what are known as mixed marriages. Strictly speaking, mixed marriages are those which take place between *baptized* persons, of whom one is a Catholic and the other a non-Catholic. Thus, the ceremony performed between a Catholic and a Jew would not be a mixed marriage in the sense of the word as we use it. A mixed marriage, generally speaking, is that which takes place between a Catholic and a Protestant. Now, although the Church tolerates such marriages under certain conditions, yet she ever deprecates them. They fall below her ideal. In order then to understand clearly why the Church looks so unfavorably on such marriages we must keep before our minds the nature of her ideal. The bond between man and wife is as the bond between Christ and His Church.

The chief characteristic of the bond between Christ and His Church is its intense intimacy and absolute perfection. Christ, indeed, by another comparison, likens it to the substantial union between Himself and His eternal Father. Nowhere can distinctness and unity be so complete as in the bosom of the blessed Trinity. The distinctness is infinite and thus enables the Father and the Son each to receive an infinite love. Their unity is that of one infinite substance which enables them to communicate to each other an infinite love, a love which issues in the person of the Holy Spirit. This is a type of the union between Christ and His Church. The Church, of course, is a finite creature and incapable of giving an infinite love to Christ. Nor again is the union between Christ and the Church a substantial union. The Church and Christ do not make up together one substance. But since that union has been likened to the substantial and infinite union of the Father and the Son, we conclude that it must be of a nature far more intimate and far more perfect than we can ever hope to comprehend. And since the union of man and wife has been likened to the union of Christ and the Church we conclude that that also must be of a nature far more intimate and far more perfect than we can ever

hope to comprehend. The Sacrament of marriage is a great mystery, a shadow of the mystic union of Christ and His Church, a shadow of the eternal and substantial union of the Father and the Son in the blessed Trinity.

The first and foremost reason why the Church deprecates mixed marriages is because they spoil God's ideal. Christ came on earth to speak the mind of the eternal Father. The Church exists to speak the mind of Christ. Any suggestion of difference of thought between the Father and the Son, or between Christ and His Church, carries with it the evident mark of its own absurdity. From this absurdity, however, we may gather something of the imperfection of a marriage union in which the parties profess different faiths. The Catholic faith is the most precious treasure, the most illustrious adornment which a man can possess. It is a possession moreover which is unique of its kind. It can not combine or make terms with any other faith. If one article be changed only in the slightest degree the whole faith is rendered vain. A marriage union, therefore, in which one party makes profession of Catholicism and the other of Protestantism can not be but an ungraceful thing in the eyes of God.

Indeed there are few people who do not recognize the irregularity. It is only the immediately interested couple who for the time being can not see that it is a matter of the highest importance. They are madly in love, and where it is a question of so much love the faith must accommodate itself to circumstances. Yet, if they could only see the connection between faith and love, they would have to recognize that diversity of faith in the marriage union must eventually tell against love in the marriage union. Faith is the gift by which we believe in God and in His word. Without belief in God we can not love Him. Without the full acceptance of His word we can not follow His commands and ordinances. We can not live in sympathy with that wonderful system of morality by which He adjusts and fosters the love between man and man. Thus it is that the Protestant married to a Catholic can not avail himself of the teaching and the Sacraments of the Catholic Church which might be so effectual in fostering love between man and wife. Real love is that only which has faith for its foundation. But in the mixed marriage the faith is all on one side. It does not flourish with that fecundity which would be present were the parties united in one and the same belief. Further, this absence of faith-informed

love on the part of the non-Catholic partner must in a measure react on the Catholic partner. Grace is very powerful, but it needs a nature upon which to act. And if the faith-informed love of the Catholic partner finds no response in the non-Catholic partner, if it receives an inferior love in return, or if it discovers itself misunderstood and unappreciated, then, if it does not dwindle away, it at least fails in its possible measure of fruitfulness.

The Church has her eyes wide open to the weakness of human nature when she tolerates a mixed marriage. A mixed marriage is a real Sacrament, and all the graces of the Sacrament are capable of being conveyed through it, though these graces may often fail in their effects through the want of disposition in the non-Catholic party. The Catholic party may do his or her best, as the case may be, but as human nature is so weak, there is naturally an ever-present danger of the Catholic losing the faith. Over and above the certainty of spoiling God's ideal there is the disadvantage of risking the loss of faith altogether. Therefore it is that the Church when she allows a mixed marriage, insists on the condition that the Catholic partner shall not be hindered in the practise of the faith. The non-Catholic must give an explicit promise to this effect. He may not make any contrary conditions either before or after the marriage. Any attempt to compel or persuade the Catholic to go to a Protestant Church, to stay away from Mass, or to abstain from Confession, is a dishonorable violation of the condition and promise. The Church by a long experience knows that such attempts are only too common. Sometimes they are done openly and menacingly. Oftener, perhaps, they are done quietly and in a friendly way. Numberless are the occasions when the danger creeps in. The Catholic is perhaps too late for Mass on Sunday. Then the obvious suggestion of the non-Catholic is: "Oh, well come to our Church for a change." Or it may be merely a social gathering under Protestant auspices, a bazaar, a tea party, an excursion—surely one can not be so narrow as to object to these? There would be less danger in them for a Catholic who was out and out a Catholic, a Catholic joined to a Catholic in marriage, and generally subject to Catholic influences. But for the Catholic who is the partner of a Protestant and who is without all those helps which an entirely Catholic family provides, these social functions are so many pitfalls. They seem harmless enough in themselves, but they lead from one thing to another, from the social to the religious. Indeed, wher-

ever one partner is Protestant, the opportunities of perversion are as persistent in their frequency as they are subtle in kind and degree. In this, as in all other dangers, prevention is better than cure. Foster a strong dislike for mixed marriages. Avoid company where you are likely to meet a partner of another religious persuasion. Reject the first overtures made by one who is not of your faith. Then if circumstances have been too many or too strong for you, make up your mind at once that only by strict observance of the conditions laid down by the Church can your faith and your hope and your love be saved.

The fostering of mutual love, however, even the most perfect and most spiritual love is not the chief end of marriage. The chief end of marriage is the begetting and educating of children for the kingdom of heaven. The Church, therefore, in her legislation for mixed marriages has a special care for the children that may be born of them. The child pertains to the ideal of the great Sacrament. In the mystery of the blessed Trinity it is the united love of the Father and the Son, in the person of the Holy Ghost. In the mystery of Christ and His Church the one is bridegroom, the other the bride, and they are united for the purpose of bringing forth children for the kingdom of heaven. So if the Sacrament of Marriage must be true to its mystic types, it must be so ordained as to be an apt principle for the bringing forth and for the educating of children in the Catholic faith. The faith is so important for the child that its influence should be felt at the first dawn of reason and all through those impressionable days of childhood and youth. No demonstration is needed to show that only when both father and mother are united in the faith can those early impressions be efficiently imparted. A different faith in either one or the other must inevitably tell on the character of the child. In the interest then of the offspring the Church looks askance on the mixed marriage. When, however, she permits it as something less good and for the sake of avoiding some greater evil, then she places a special condition in favor of the children. The non-Catholic party must explicitly promise that all the children may be brought up in the Catholic religion. There must be no compromise. Oftentimes the non-Catholic party proposes to meet the Church half way and suggests that the girls shall follow the mother while the boys follow the father. And the idea prevails in some quarters that the Church is willing to allow this. Let it be clearly made known that

the Church knows nothing of such half measures. According to her law every child of a mixed marriage must be brought up a Catholic. The soul of a boy is just as valuable as the soul of a girl, and the soul of a girl is just as valuable as the soul of a boy, for both have been bought with an infinite price. In their education, therefore, there must be no compromise. All, without exception, must be brought up in the Catholic faith.

Further, the Church has also a cure for the non-Catholic party. He has already received the Sacrament of Baptism and now he receives the Sacrament of Matrimony. He is a subject of the Church, albeit a rebellious subject. His rebellious state may be due to no fault of his own and he may not recognize his rebellious state. The Church, however, recognizes it and consequently makes a special effort to win him back to her obedience. She places a third condition to a mixed marriage—there must be some reasonable hope of the non-Catholic party becoming Catholic. The condition tends to the perfection of the ideal, tends to the preservation of the faith of the Catholic partner, tends to the preservation of the faith of the children, tends to the eternal salvation of the non-Catholic partner. The reasonableness of the condition is evident. Its application, however, seems at first sight to be fraught with considerable difficulty. How is one to know whether there is any hope of a professing Protestant becoming a Catholic? Does not the Spirit breathe where He will? Must the non-Catholic have already entered upon a course of instruction? The practise of the Church does not require the manifestation of such clear signs as suggested in the last question. But the two conditions concerning the faith of the wife and the children, if generously fulfilled, would seem to go a long way toward fulfilling the third condition. If the non-Catholic party willingly signs the declaration that his wife may have the free exercise of her religion and that the children may be brought up Catholics, then that may be deemed sufficient grounds for hoping that he, too, may some day become a Catholic. Evidently he is not fighting against the Church. Evidently he has some good will toward it. Presumably he is not resisting grace. Under such conditions one may reasonably hope that the grace of God will some day prove effectual.

We must strive then to keep three things well to the front of the Catholic consciousness. First, the union of marriage is a great Sacrament, having its ideal likened to the union between the

Father and the Son, and to the union between Christ and His Church. Secondly, mixed marriages are discountenanced by the Church because they spoil God's ideal, because they endanger the faith of the Catholic party and because they endanger the faith of the children. Thirdly, they are sometimes tolerated in order to avoid greater evils, and then only on the three conditions that the Catholic shall have free exercise of religion, that all children shall be educated as Catholics, and that there shall be a reasonable hope of the Protestant becoming a Catholic.

# XXVI. THE SACRAMENT OF MARRIAGE

BY THE REV. THOMAS J. GERRARD

## V. Husband and Wife

"Wives, be obedient to your husbands, as you should be in the Lord. Husbands, love your wives and be not bitter toward them."--Coloss. iii, 18, 19.

*SYNOPSIS.—Introduction.—The prevalent tendency to lower the ideal matrimony and its consequent social aberrations due to a widespread misunderstanding of the nature of conjugal love and obedience.*

*I. The nature of conjugal love. The ideal requires three persons, husband, wife and child. The love of husband and wife preparatory to the love of the child. The nature of the man requires that he should put forth a special effort in the cultivation of love. The woman predominates in love, but nevertheless is endowed with intelligence. The husband, in developing his love, needs to cultivate the qualities of being (a) affectionate, (b) practical, and (c) exclusive. His love must be first affectionate, because his wife needs affection most of all. Secondly, it must be practical, else business, intellectual pursuits, clubs and public houses will distract all attention away from the home. Thirdly, it must be exclusive, even in litte things, for all unfaithfulness tends to the disruption of the family.*

*II. The wife's love must likewise be affectionate, practical and exclusive, though the order of importance is reversed.*

*III. The nature of conjugal obedience, not servile obedience. Man is the head of the family, but not the tyrant of the family. He need only be obeyed when his demands are confined to their proper sphere. Suggestions as to the limits of this sphere. Differs with individuals and circumstances. Broadly speaking the man is supreme in business matters, the woman in domestic matters. The man never to be obeyed if he demands anything contrary to divine law. In cases of doubt the presumption is in his favor.*

*Conclusion.—Better to depend on mutual good will than on argument as to which has the right to command.*

In all civilized countries, except perhaps in Ireland, there is to be observed at the present time a lowering of the ideal relationship between man and wife. There are many causes which tend toward this, the easiness of divorce, the abuse of the conjugal rights, the rush of commerce and civilization with consequent neglect of the home, the propagation of extreme socialistic ideas. Indeed it would be impossible to judge in one short sermon even a half of the evil influences at work. But as the family is the foundation of society, there may be sought in the family itself the root of those social aberrations which in turn react on the family and reproduce their

evil fruits a thousandfold. St. Paul touches two sensitive nerves when he says: "Wives, be obedient to your husbands as you should be in the Lord. Husbands, love your wives and be not bitter toward them."

Doubtless the Apostle was writing to correct certain abuses prevalent among the people to whom he wrote. He was not necessarily giving a full and comprehensive description of the marriage ideal. Forgetting this, many people have misunderstood the Apostle's words, especially that portion of them which speaks of the obedience of wives. How many women there are now who, reading the epistle in the light of present day abuses, "can not stand that man Paul!" Let our consideration then be confined to these two virtues of conjugal relationship, love and obedience, for it is the failure to appreciate their true nature which issues in multitudes of other evils affecting not only individual families, but communities, nations, nay, the whole human race.

"Husbands, love your wives." The Apostle is evidently referring to a neglect on the part of the husbands. He is not talking as if love were to be a one-sided affair. The very nature of love requires that it should be reciprocal and should exist at least between two persons. The ideal love requires three persons. In God it is the love of the blessed Trinity. In the religious it is the love of God and of one's neighbor. In the family it is the love of husband, wife and child. The love between two is the inchoate and root love which issues in the perfect love between three. The love of the Father and the Son issues in the personal Spirit of love. A religious must love God before she can love her neighbor. Husband and wife must love each other before they can love their children perfectly. It often happens that a wife who is without a husband's love can take refuge in the love of her children. But she can love her children more when she knows that she possesses also the love of their father.

The nature of man and woman, however, is such that the love of the man toward the woman needs a more careful watching, a more careful cultivation. A woman's love is as a torrent which is always flowing. It has been used even by God as one of the most forceful analogies by which to make men realize His love for mankind. It is of its nature so generous and so constant as to overshadow that other endowment of woman, her intelligence. The difference, however, between the two faculties, the faculty of loving

and the faculty of thinking, is not so great as has been frequently supposed. In our endeavor to emphasize the quality of a woman's love we may not undervalue her intelligence. We must ever remember that woman is essentially a rational being just as man is. She herself is beginning to realize this all the world over. One of the most remarkable phenomenon of the age is the movement for the emancipation of women. While admitting and asserting then the claims of woman's intelligence we can not overlook the fact that it is in affairs of the heart that she is the stronger. On the other hand it is, ordinarily speaking, the lot of the man to be the breadwinner of the family. He it is who must use his brains in the learned professions, in commerce, in the arts and in the crafts. There are exceptions. Oftentimes the wife is the brains of the family. Half of the teaching profession consists of women. But the lady doctor, the lady dentist and the lady professor usually find it more convenient to retire from their professions whenever they enter the state of matrimony. And simply because man is the working brains of the family his faculty of loving needs a special culture. He has so many outlets for his attention that if he does not take the greatest care, his love which should be devoted to his wife and family is absorbed in his business or other intellectual pursuit.

The lines upon which the cultivation of a husband's love should take place will be decided according to the character and dispositions of the wife. Generally, however, it must have the three qualities of being affectionate, practical and exclusive. It must be first of all affectionate. The double affection of a woman for her children and her husband springs from the same affectionate nature. If it is to flourish it must be fed. The need must be satisfied or it will shrivel away. There is a tendency among men to regard the time of courtship as the time of poetry, and the time of marriage as the time of prose. And there is an axiom among women that they are to expect about half as much affection after marriage as before. It is very sad that it should be so, although it may be excusable. There are far more cares in the married state than in the single, which of their very nature tend to take the poetry out of life. It has been divinely foretold that such shall have trouble in the flesh. But it need not be so bad as it is. Nay, the very cares which tend to lessen the affection ought to be the occasion of its increase. To cultivate such affection requires an active will and a keen intelligence. The man ought to be a man. That is, he ought not to

allow himself to be moved merely by his passions and feelings. He ought to use his intelligence to find out what little acts of sympathy, kindness, interest and attention affect his wife's feelings toward himself. Then he ought to put forth a strong will in the frequent repetition of such acts. It is extremely beautiful when an old Darby and Joan can look back on a married life of say forty years and tell you with a knowing smile that they have not yet finished courting. They have learnt the secret of cultivating affection, of seizing upon adversity only as an occasion for deeper sympathy, of studying each others likes and dislikes, of saying the word which gives pleasure, of avoiding the word which gives pain.

Secondly, a husband's love must be practical. Here again it is a question of external attractions against the attraction of the wife at home. Some men there are so absorbed in their business or profession as to regard their wife and home as a mere accident in life. Their business is not as it were a means of keeping one's self, wife and family in comfort, but rather the wife and the family are the means of carrying on the business. Or again the counter attraction may be only low pleasures, the pleasure of company, the pleasure of the club, the pleasure of the public-house. All are violations of the practical love due from husband to wife. Frequently the wife can just tolerate them provided she gets the affection. But that is only because by nature she has such a strong affection. Nevertheless a prolonged neglect of the practical side of a husband's love must wear out a wife's affection, and then there is an end of all love, the family life is broken and the strength of society is sapped at its foundations. The husband's practical love of his wife, therefore, his care for her dress, her housekeeping, her health, her pleasures has consequences reaching much further than would appear at first sight. His affection must be translated into action, else he fails in one of the greatest duties of his manhood.

Thirdly, a husband's love must be exclusive. The Christian dispensation in forbidding polygamy shows how much more it is in conformity with the laws of human nature than the other religions which allow plurality of wives. If there is one instinct which is paramount in woman it is that the love given to her by her husband must be exclusive. And what the law of nature demands the law of revelation confirms and sanctions. The Christian wife can not for a moment tolerate the idea which prevails in the Mormon or the Mohammedan social systems. Even more peremptory is the law of

nature against the crime of adultery. Nowhere, however, are these laws of nature more carefully protected than in the Catholic Church. She has had twenty centuries' experience of human nature. She knows quite well that those laws can not be observed by merely forbidding the grosser sins of adultery or polygamy. One does not fall into those sins suddenly while leading an otherwise pure and blameless life. The way is prepared by a series of seemingly less harmful sins, the unchaste thought, the unchaste look, the unchaste word. Therefore, it is that in the matter of purity the Church brands as mortal sin even the lesser faults when deliberately committed. The true Christian husband then will not be content with merely guarding against sin. He will strive all he can in the opposite direction. He will avoid even innocent attentions to others which may possibly give displeasure to his wife. He will make it a special study and effort that his wife shall realize that she is the only one who has any attraction for him. If this habit of thought and action be sedulously cultivated it will bear fruit on both sides. The mutual love between husband and wife will be so strong and constant as to leave no room for jealousy, for such love is strong as death and actually is the death of that jealousy which would be hard as hell.

What has been said of a husband's love applies equally to a wife's love. It must be affectionate, practical and exclusive. Although these qualities are ordinarily found more pronounced and more natural in the wife than in the husband, yet even the wife can not afford to leave them to natural impulse. She also must cultivate them, must watch them, must seek out opportunities of giving them free and healthy exercise. There is only a slight difference in their order. Bending to the nature of the man, instead of making her love first affectionate, then practical, then exclusive, she will simply reverse the order so that her love shall be first exclusive, then practical, and then affectionate.

"Wives, be obedient to your husbands in the Lord." Like all other social movements, the movement for the emancipation of women is fraught with the danger of rushing into the opposite error of that which is to be remedied. Impotent of discernment, the agitator will purge away both the dross and the gold together. Especially in this question of the obedience of wives to husbands will he, or rather she, persist in confusing the true obedience with false, in condemning an obedience which no Christian wife is supposed to

render. Let us see then what is conjugal obedience. No one will deny that in some sense the husband is the head of the family. Man was made first, and made lord of the earth. In his overlordship he was lonely and had need of a helpmeet for him. To this end was a woman taken from his flesh and bone and given to him to be his wife. She was not to be reckoned among the rest of creation as part of the man's goods and chattels. Nor yet was she to be reckoned above man. Nor yet again was she to be reckoned as fulfilling the same office as man. She was to be his complement, helping him in those things for which by nature he was unsuited. He was to be the strong element, she the gentle. He was to be her protector; she was to find her joy in the sense of the security of his protection. Obviously then she was meant to yield at least to some extent to his overlordship. The only question is as to what extent. We all know the distinction between servile and filial obedience. The one is the obedience of slaves, informed by the motive of fear; the other is the obedience of sons, informed by the motive of love. So likewise there is a distinction between servile obedience and conjugal obedience. The obedience of wives is as much raised above that of sons as that of sons is above that of slaves. Doubtless there have been many husbands who have demanded of their wives the obedience of a slave. And doubtless such husbands are largely responsible for much of the present misunderstanding of the nature and limits of wifely obedience. Broadly speaking we may say that the obedience of the wife is due to the husband only within certain limits. It is not absolute. It is due to him in all those matters where it is evident that he must rule. It is not due to him in those matters where it is evident that the wife must rule. All matters of business, everything which seriously affects the income of the family, the choice of trades or professions for the children, these evidently belong to the judgment of the husband. The wife may be and ought to be frequently consulted. But having expressed her opinion she ought abide by the decision of the head of the family. On the other hand the interior domestic arrangements pertain to the judgment of the wife. The management of servants and babies for instance, are points upon which the husband should have nothing to say, except perhaps when he is asked or when he divines that his suggestion will meet with his wife's approval. And a wife would be acting well within her rights were she to resent any interference in these matters.

Fourthly, hard and fast rules, however, can not be laid down. Much depends upon the temperament of individuals and the force of circumstances. If a man has failed in business, say three times, and eventually has to depend on his wife's dowry for a livelihood, or upon another business built up by his wife, then he can not expect to have the same authority as one possessing the full complement of manhood.

Again, no obedience is due to him when he is obviously demanding something contrary to divine law. To require a wife to give up any of her religious duties as a Catholic, to ask her to do something which is against any of the Ten Commandments, these are occasions when she not only may, but must disobey. In all cases of doubt, however, the presumption is in favor of the husband.

Above all things, however, the obedience must have its foundation in mutual love. Unless there is present that determination to love each other through thick and thin, through success and through adversity, through life and through death, it will be useless to try to decide by argument who has the right to command and who the duty to obey. The love of marriage is a great mystery, and he who would reduce it to mechanical laws must possess a higher knowledge than that ever yet possessed by mere man.

## XXVII. THE SACRAMENT OF MARRIAGE

BY THE REV. THOMAS J. GERRARD

### VI. The Catholic Family

"And he went down with them, came to Nazareth: and he was subject unto them."—Luke ii, 51.

*SYNOPSIS.—Introduction.—The ideal of family life realized at Nazareth. Nazareth the beginning of the Church. The end of the Church is the salvation of souls. The end of the family is the salvation of souls.*

*I. Circumcision points the lesson of parents' responsibility in procuring Baptism for children. Parents do not create, but are the occasion of the creation of the child's soul by God. Therefore responsibility. Our Lord's acquisition of experimental knowledge points the lesson of Catholic education. This should begin with the first dawn of consciousness and continue until manhood.*

*II. External characteristics of the Catholic home. Catholic pictures. Catholic literature. Special need of the Catholic newspaper.*

*III. The subjection of Jesus to Joseph and Mary points the lesson of right order in the family. Love is the chief principle, but love rightly ordered. Subjection of children not slavish, but filial. Limited by God's law. Examples calling for attention. The question of servants. Servants members of the household; not children but not slaves. The material well-being of the children not incompatible, though perhaps a little difficult, with exercise of religion. The cause of Catholicity helped by good Catholics who are efficient in their professions.*

*Conclusion.—Emphasis of main points.*

The ideal of the Catholic family has been once fully realized. There have been many good examples, all more or less approaching the ideal. But all except one must be regarded as having failed, at least in some respects, to achieve the perfection of family life. That one, of course, is the Holy Family of Nazareth. Since, therefore, God has given us the ideal fully realized in the concrete, it is to that rather than the more remote symbols that we must go for our lessons as to what the Catholic family should be. The Word was made flesh to reveal to us the mind of the Eternal Father. In order, then, to learn the mind of the Eternal Father concerning the nature and end of the Catholic family life we can not do better than turn our thoughts to the little home at Nazareth.

The school of the Apostles was formed by Our Lord during the

years of His public ministry. Then, having been organized by Him during His lifetime, it was fully promulgated and endowed with its special gifts after His death by the descent of the Holy Ghost on the day of Pentecost. The purpose of the Incarnation was the salvation of souls. The purpose of the Church was the salvation of souls. The purpose of the first Catholic Family was the salvation of souls. The first and foremost purpose, then, of every Catholic family is to obtain for its members the possession of everlasting life. The family does not exist merely for the sake of the love of husband and wife; nor for the love of parent and children; nor for the acquisition of worldly fortunes; nor for the promotion of the children in business; nor for the material prosperity of nations. All these are lawful and subordinate aims, subordinate to the final aim which is to help immortal souls to get to heaven. This is the first and, in a sense, the only lesson to be learned from the Holy Family of Nazareth; the purpose of the Catholic family is the undoing of sin, the hindrance of sin, the propagation of those truths and virtues which lead to life eternal.

After eight days were accomplished the child Jesus was taken to be circumcised. Christ needed not the rite for Himself, but chose to undergo it in order to set the example to the coming Church of directing its earliest attention to the claims of the soul of the new-born child. Baptism was to supplant the rite of circumcision. Every Christian father and mother was to learn from Mary and Joseph the duty of seeing that the souls of their children should have earliest access to the rite by which they are made heirs to the kingdom of heaven. This is a grave responsibility. The parents are not the authors of a child's soul, but only of its body. The soul is specially created by God and infused into the body. Thus the parents are the occasion of the creation of the child's soul. God creates the soul freely, but conditionally on the will of the parents. The parents, then, having occasioned the creation of a new soul take upon themselves the responsibility of putting it within the reach of the means of coming to the end for which it was created. Baptism is an absolutely necessary means of salvation. And parents who put off or neglect this duty fail in one of the greatest obligations of the married state. There are numbers of half-instructed Catholic mothers who are most anxious about the rite of "Churching of Women," yet careless about the baptism of the child. Let it be known, far and wide, that there is no comparison between the two

ceremonies. Baptism is a Sacrament necessary for the child's salvation and should be administered as soon as possible; Churching is not a Sacrament, but only a blessing, not necessary for salvation, but only a useful help which may be deferred to any time suitable to the mother's convenience.

The child Jesus grew in wisdom and age and grace in the eyes of God and of men. Although possessing the Beatific Vision, and consequently all wisdom, knowledge and grace, yet Jesus deemed it expedient to acquire an experimental knowledge of things, to learn from Joseph and Mary the great truths about religion, and how to apply them to the development of the spiritual life. Jesus was the foundation of all grace. He was knowledge itself; He was Wisdom itself; but He chose that His wisdom and knowledge and grace should be manifested gradually. He chose to undergo that laborious education to set the example to all Christian families, to show them that it was only by constant teaching and learning that Christian character could be formed. The Christian mother then assiduously watches for the first dawn of conscience in her child. She knows, or ought to know, that first impressions are the most effective and most lasting. She delights to take her child on her knees and teach it to pray. Her pride is to show her friends how her little one can say the "Our Father" and the "Hail Mary." The time at length comes when the child must be sent to school. There must be no question about the character of the school, it must be Catholic.

The Catholic school will undoubtedly possess a Catholic atmosphere. The constant or frequent presence of priests or religious, the Catholic prayers, the statues and the fixtures, all tend to keep before the mind of the child the fact that he is a Catholic.

Now the Catholic home ought to be at least as Catholic as the Catholic school. There ought to be prominent signs about the house that it is the abode of a Catholic family. There is a feeling in some families, having pretensions to be up-to-date and fashionable, to regard a religious picture in the drawing-room as out of place. This feeling is generally the fruit of worldliness. It is also, in a measure, due to the large number of inferior pictures which flood the market, those cheap lithographs of the Pope or the bishop, which are a compliment to neither. A zealous father of a Catholic family will make an endeavor to hang up one or two good and really artistic religious pictures. They give a tone to the house,

impressing the faith on the minds of the members of the family, and expressing the faith of the family to visitors.

More important even than Catholic art is Catholic literature. These are days when everybody reads or, at least, is supposed to read. And it is notorious that Catholics do not buy books as they should. Our Holy Father has warned us that unless we support a good Catholic press it will be useless for us to build schools and churches. Now, the Catholic Church is not wanting, either in excellent writers or excellent publishers. Our book stores are rich in devotional, scientific and recreative literature. The crying shame is that so little of this finds its way into the Catholic family. Heads of Catholic families, therefore, ought to see to it at once that there is a shelf for religious literature, that there is a regular subscription to some monthly or quarterly Catholic journal, and, especially among the working classes, a subscription to some Catholic weekly newspaper. It is chiefly through the press that the members of the family learn their relationship to other institutions in the world. The secular press keeps them provided with political news and so constantly reminds them of their civic duties. But the secular press is not an ideal medium for showing the Catholic his duty to the State. Especially in the matter of education does the Catholic need to know the bearings between the mind of the Church and the mind of the State. And he ought to know this not only on general principles, but also in the application of those principles to the particular circumstances of his country. He must know what the bishops have said, what the government has done to this or that particular school or college, and what the government proposes to do with schools and colleges in the future. In a word, he must be alive to his duties as a Catholic citizen. The family life is the foundation of true citizenship. Since, therefore, the Catholic press is the means by which the Catholic learns the bearings between the family, the Church, the State, the Catholic press ought to be an institution in every Catholic household.

And Jesus went down with them, and came to Nazareth and was subject unto them. Order is said to be heaven's first command. If, on the other hand, love be said to be the first and final law of heaven, the statement must be qualified by making the love a well ordered love. Even sin is only love out of order, the love of something contrary to the Divine Will. So also in the family life love must be the ruling principle, but it must be a well-ordered love. Our

Lord, therefore, in order to teach us this lesson went down with His parents to Nazareth, and was subject unto them. Nowhere outside the bosom of the Blessed Trinity was a triple love so perfect as that love between Jesus, Mary and Joseph. Yet St. Joseph was the head and ruler of the family. It was St. Joseph who was told to fear not, but take Mary to be his spouse. It was St. Joseph who was told by the angel to arise and take the Child and His mother and flee into Egypt. It was St. Joseph who was divinely commanded to return and take Mary and Jesus to Nazareth. Although Mary was so much spiritually exalted over Joseph, yet Joseph was to be the ruler of the family. And although Jesus was so much spiritually exalted over Joseph and Mary, yet in the family He was to be subject to both. Here then is the rule for the Catholic family. The father is to be supreme ruler, the mother is to rule in her sphere under him, the children are to be subject to both. Moreover, the subjection of the children is not to be a slavish subjection, but a filial subjection. It must be informed by love rather than by fear. There must, of course, be a certain fear present in the children, but a reverential fear, a fear by which one is afraid of offending love, rather than a fear by which one is afraid of punishment. Further, the obedience of children is not unlimited. If parents command anything contrary to divine law the duty of the children is to disobey. In cases of doubt, however, the presumption is in favor of the parents. But wherever there is a question of family interest or domestic arrangements the will of the parents must be obeyed. It is not for children to say which school they shall go to, to say where the family shall take up its abode, to say at what hour the family shall dine, to say what time they shall come in at night. These are points upon which children frequently mistake their place in the family, points in which they are obviously subject to their parents. There comes a time, too, when children grow up. The relationships between them and their parents then become somewhat modified. Nevertheless there still remain the duties of reverence and love. The children are free to choose their own states of life. In this they are not bound to follow the wishes of their parents, but they are bound to consult their parents and to weigh the considerations which they put forth. Then later, when the parents are overtaken with old age, the children are bound in cases of necessity to support them.

The Holy Family at Nazareth was very poor. Consequently we

can not look to it directly for an example in the question of servants. But we can easily imagine how Our Lady would have acted did she have need to call in a little extra help now and then. We shall only fall short of the mark when we do our best with our imagination to picture the kind and gentle consideration which Our Lady would have shown to anyone who did her a service. From that picture, however, we may get some hints as to the relationship between masters, or rather mistresses and servants in the circumstances of modern society. The servants of to-day are not on a level with the children of the household; nor yet are they on a level with the slaves of an ancient Roman household. They are not the goods and chattels of those who employ them. Their service is that of free contract. And it is something more. Since the servants live in the house, the house is, in a sense, their home. It is the duty, therefore, of the mistress of the house to arrange matters for the servants in such a way that they shall feel that they have a home. They must have opportunities for their religious duties whether they be Catholic or Protestant. They must have a reasonable amount of opportunity for recreation. They must have their wages paid promptly. A mistress can insist upon her servants being kept up to the mark in their work, and yet insist kindly. And she will do well to examine her conscience frequently as to how often she has engaged in gossip about the servants' faults. There are some women who can spend whole afternoons and evenings talking on that and no other topic. If a servant is so bad she has no longer any right to be in the place. A word should be said, too, as to the treatment of servants in illness. They can not expect the same affection as the children; but since they are members of the household they ought, at least, have the attendance of the family physician, and all things necessary to get them well again. Here is a point where Catholic wives may set an example to the generality of society dames. The servant may not be set above the head of her mistress, but neither may she be trampled under her foot.

From the principles of order and superiority and subjection in the family there arises the duty of the parents, and especially of the father of providing for the material well-being of the children. There is an impression prevalent that worldly success and Roman Catholicism are not compatible. And it is certainly true that in many Protestant communities the Catholic is at a disadvantage.

That is only an extra reason why Catholics should make themselves more proficient in their respective trades and professions. If a Catholic lawyer or doctor or engineer excels in his own vocation, then Protestant, Jew and Infidel will engage him in preference. And if he shines in his Catholicity as he does in his profession, then the cause of Catholicity will benefit in proportion. The father of the Catholic family, therefore, must provide his children with a good secular education. The school must be Catholic, but it must likewise be efficient in its secular subjects. Piety must come before worldly success, but it need not be allowed to supplant it. We have schools in abundance, schools as efficient as any secular schools in the country. There is no need to go outside the Church, though there may be need to use discrimination within the Church. And this discrimination is the office of the parents of the family.

We may sum up then the principles of Catholic family life thus: The family is the foundation of the State, and the strength and purity of the State depend on the strength and purity of the family. The family, however, is not the foundation of the Church, but is rather the child of the Church, taking its instructions from the Church, and existing primarily for the same end as the Church, namely, the salvation of souls. It should, therefore, be Catholic in its faith, Catholic in its hope, and Catholic in its love. The Catholic faith will be fostered by ceaseless attention to the Sacraments, to Catholic education during youth, and Catholic instruction through the press during manhood. From Catholic faith and hope will spring Catholic love. This will be made ever more and more fruitful by being kept in order, the father and mother ruling by love, the children obeying through love. The endeavor must be made to carry these Catholic principles into the world of business and professions, and to show to the non-Catholic world that religion and intellectual efficiency are not incompatible, nay to show that only by the observance of the law of religion can the family, and consequently the State, achieve the perfection which it desires.

# XXVIII. THE SACRAMENT OF MARRIAGE

BY THE REV. THOMAS J. GERRARD

## VII. The Blessing of Many Children

"She shall be saved however through child-bearing, if she shall persevere in faith and love and holiness and sobriety."—Tim. ii, 15.

*SYNOPSIS.—Introduction.—The primary end of marriage is the procreation of children. This end is raised in Christian marriage to the end of bringing forth children not only for this world, but also for the next.*

*I. Many children a blessing to the family. A large family supplies a wider opportunity for the exercise and satisfaction of love and affection. It is a means of developing character both in parents and children. In the father it develops courage, self-denial and self-restraint; in the mother, patience, gentleness and tact; in the children, generosity and unselfishness. It strengthens both the temporal and eternal interests of the family. Parents have more chance of support in sickness and old age. Children have more to depend on in the hour of adversity.*

*II. Many children a blessing to the State. The large family increases (a) the productive power of the nation, (b) the defensive power of the nation, (c) the intellectual and moral power of the nation.*

*III. Many children a blessing to heaven. Family made for the glory of God. The more human souls sent to heaven, the greater is the praise and glory given to God. To interfere with the course of nature is to hinder God's plans. Not only a wrong to the children which might be born, but a reactionary wrong against the parents.*

*Conclusion.—Apology for speaking of the evil; necessity. Extent of the evil. Some practical suggestions. The need of having supernatural motives and of supernaturalizing the natural ones.*

When man and woman were first joined together in holy Matrimony a divine command was given unto them to increase and multiply and to replenish the earth. Adam alone was lonely and lonely in more senses than one. Eve was given to him to be his companion, not merely, however, for the sake of companionship, but also for the benefit of the race of which he was to be the father. She was to be the co-principle with him for the procreation of the great human family. She was to be his help in domestic life and also his help in the life of the race. The whole earth was to be replenished by their offspring. This was one of the first and most peremptory laws of nature. And being such a fundamental law it has persevered until now and must persevere until this world is exhausted,

until there is no more use for the law, until we are safe in heaven where we shall be as the angels, neither giving nor taking in marriage. This natural law, moreover, has in the meantime been fortified by additional sanctions. The natural law is a reflection of the divine Mind. The new sanctions, therefore, do not alter, but emphasize the original law. Throughout the Jewish dispensation, therefore, we find that fruitfulness in child-bearing was ever regarded as a sign of divine predilection, as a fulfilment of God's promises of prosperity. And as fruitfulness was looked upon as a special sign of God's favor so was barrenness looked upon as a sign of God's displeasure or forgetfulness. Further, when the contract of marriage was raised by Christ to the dignity of a Sacrament, this same end of marriage remained as the chief, the procreation of children; but at the same time it was raised to a higher plane, the procreation of children both for this world and for the next. The mother who had done her duty in this matter had fulfilled her highest destiny. By bringing many children into the world, by bringing them into the Church through Baptism, by bringing them to their final salvation through her good example and zeal for Christian education, she had saved her own soul. "She shall be saved, however, through child-bearing, if she shall persevere in faith and love and holiness and sobriety." Seeing then that this fruitfulness is according to God's will, it must be rewarded with God's blessing. And indeed it is first a blessing to the family, secondly a blessing to the State, and eventually a blessing to heaven itself.

Many children are a blessing to the family. First, they provide the opportunity for the exercise of one of the strongest instincts of nature, family affection, the love of parents toward children, of children toward parents, of children toward each other. No matter how many children a mother may have her love for any one of them is not thereby diminished, but rather increased. If she had to part with any one of them, she could not make the choice. They are each dear to her because they are her own, because they are the children of her husband, and because they are brothers and sisters to each other. The family love is so woven and interwoven, that the greater the number of the threads the more difficult it is to distinguish any one of them. This may be the result of merely natural affection. When, however, the family love is intertwined with supernatural faith, supernatural hope and supernatural love, then is the family bond made indefinitely stronger and the family

love more keen and more satisfying. The mother of the Machabees did not love her children less, but indescribably more when she had to lead them to be sacrificed for the sake of God's cause. And although her natural sorrow must have been one of the most poignant ever suffered by mother on account of children, yet her supernatural joy must have surpassed it in intensity and have produced in her maternal heart a satisfaction far exceeding the natural void caused by her bereavement.

Secondly, a large family is a means of developing character, both in the parents and in the children. In the case of the father, it is a question as to whether he will face the task of working and saving for the means of bringing up a large family. He certainly needs courage. He certainly needs self-denial and self-restraint. He certainly needs the help of Sacraments and other religious ordinances. But these are the very warp and woof of manly character. He is only a weakling, therefore, wanting in manhood and wanting in the stamina of a Christian who shirks the duties of fatherhood merely because they involve a heavier burden. In the case of the mother, it is a question as to whether she will face the illness and the anxieties incident to a large family of children, and possibly, which is the greatest trial of all, displeasure and neglect on the part of her husband. The burden of motherhood then acts against flimsy attractions of the world of pleasure. It concentrates her attention on the family. It gives her an interest than which nothing is more absorbing and satisfying outside heaven. In a word, it develops her womanhood. And, since she is of the gentler, as contrasted to the sterner, sex, her numerous anxieties will develop in her the quality of gentleness. Further, if she is so unfortunate as to have a husband who is unkind or neglectful or difficult, then it will bring out her characteristic of tact. There are few husbands who do not need some "managing." And it is the glory of some wives that they know how to "manage" their husbands; how to get what they want without crying or quarreling for it. Surely, therefore, it must be an accomplishment worth cultivating to be able to rule by tact and by persuasion rather than by force or harshness. Now a large family implies many relations to be adjusted, many misunderstandings to be smoothed over, many arrangements for the mutual welfare of all. It is the mother of the family who has to do all this. It is by her instinctive tact and enduring patience that the family is held together. The more

accomplished she is in this office the brighter does she shine as an example of motherhood. And the greater will be her accomplishment in proportion as she has the greater number of children to care for. In the case of the children it is a question of generosity or selfishness. Who has not looked with dismay on the spoilt child, the only one of the family? Who has not observed the ugly self-consciousness, pride and vanity of two children, the miserable two who have had no other companions but each other during the years when the foundation of their character was laid? And who has not seen the beautiful unselfishness and generosity of the children of a family of seven, or better still of a family of fourteen? Why even their faults and their sins are due to excess of generosity rather than to defect in it. The principle of give and take has been so often demanded of them and so often exercised, that it must have grown into a fixed habit by the time they come to separate and go their way in life apart. The boys have had their boyishness toned down by the gentle influence of the girls, while the girls have had their girlishness toned up by the strong influence of the boys.

Thirdly. A large family is a means of strengthening both the temporal and the eternal interests of the family. Even from a worldly point of view a father is working against his own interests in setting limits to his family from motives of economical selfishness. His view must be a broad one, however. The law of nature pervades the organization of society even as it does the organization of the physical universe, and none the less does it there reflect the mind of God. It is, therefore, both the law of nature and the law of God that children should support their parents in sickness and old age. When, however, there is only one child or two, and these have wives and families of their own to support, there is little opportunity of supporting aged parents. But where the burden is divided, among say seven or eight families, then the aged couple have some hope of ending their days in reasonable and frugal comfort. Again, we must remember that in most countries the provision of free education is such as to leave no room whatever for the excuse of economy. If the father has the pretension to go further and to leave his two children enough inheritance to save them from the necessity of working for a living, then he is doing an injustice both to his children and to society. Drones are a nuisance in every line. In all stages of society the work of bringing up a family of children is a burden both to the father and to the mother.

It is a burden, however, which is followed by a handsome reward if only it is generously accepted. The children, too, must profit by their larger number. The world is so wide, trades and professions are so manifold as to leave practically little difference in the difficulty of finding situations for eight and that of finding situations for two. Nay if we look around we shall find that it is the only boy rather who fails to make a good beginning, and the only girl rather who fails to secure a husband or a vocation. Owing to the absence of fraternal influence and education they have not got the grit in them to make them attractive to others. Then again later in life, the many are a help to each other in time of difficulty. They do not all meet with adversity at the same time. If one is low down in business or low down in health, his brothers and sisters are there to help him, each knowing that he or she may likewise depend on the others whenever the hour of distress shall overtake them.

This mutual support extends also to the sphere of faith and morality. How often has not a father been kept to his religion and a mother been saved from temptation by the thought of the children! It is curious how parents who have given up the practise of religion themselves have often insisted on their children being taught religion and brought up in a good moral atmosphere, and eventually through the children have been brought back again to God. Holy marriage is a Sacrament and as such is a means of grace. It is an instrument of the Holy Spirit, and no one can tell the multitudinous ways and times and places in which the Holy Spirit uses this instrument.

The family being the foundation of the State, its life must produce an effect on the life of the State. If fruitfulness in childbearing is a blessing to the family, it is likewise a blessing to the State. A man has reached a high state of natural virtue if he can be so unselfish as to take the interests of the State as a motive for his own right conduct. Human nature being what it is such a motive can hardly be expected to work as the predominant one. It can, however, act, and act effectively as a supplementary one. It is a motive, too, which goes a long way in the formation of public opinion which reacts on private opinion. When the abuses of family life were first propagated, they were propagated ostensibly with a view to promoting the nation's welfare. The country was said to be overpopulated and these abuses were introduced to

reduce the population. The nations, however, which have allowed themselves to submit to these abuses have found out to their heavy cost the great mistake which they have made. Statesmen with no pretensions to high morals or a godly life have discovered that this abuse is a canker eating away the vitals of the nation. France stands out pre-eminently as the worst sinner of all. This last year her death-rate exceeded her birth-rate. Germany is wide awake to the evil and a movement has been set on foot to counteract the growing practise. Otherwise prepared for emergencies in the case of war, this would be her weakest point. England has to lament her decadence due to practises introduced from France. And in America the sermon preached by President Roosevelt on the burden and duties of the married state tells of the prevalence of the evil, and emphasizes the fact that the evil is a curse to any nation. It weakens its power of production; it weakens its power of defense; it weakens its power of intelligence and morality; it weakens the very life blood of the limited offspring which actually is born, for such offspring must come from a principle which is already marked by weakness, softness and decadence.

The Christian family, however, was not made for the State as for its final destiny. It was made for the glory of God. Fruitfulness in child-bearing tells eventually for the greater glory of God. The mutual happiness of the persons of the blessed Trinity is all sufficient for the intrinsic glory of God. God, however, has chosen to surround Himself with an extrinsic glory. He has created creatures to give him honor and praise. And the greatest honor and praise of this kind which can be given Him is that of man. It adds nothing to God's internal happiness, but is rather the expression and diffusion of God's love and goodness outside Himself. God, therefore, having provided this great happiness for His creatures He wishes as many as possible to avail themselves of it. In this way He obtains His greatest external glory. The greater the number of souls that are added to the number of the elect, so much the richer is the music of Nature's hymn of praise. That this is the mind of the Church may be seen from the enormous care which she takes for the happiness of infants. Her priests are bound to undergo the gravest inconveniences in order that they may apply the baptismal water to any child in urgent need of it. Why is this? It is because Christ has died for and purchased these children. It is because God has chosen for Himself a number of elect souls, a great

number which we can not count, but which we must do our best to make up, presuming or rather knowing that to do so will require all our spiritual efforts. To hinder the course of nature, therefore, is to interfere with God's plans. It is to pull down His work in the Church militant and to lessen His glory in the Church triumphant. A diminution of the number in the children of the Church is a diminution of the Church's collective faith, and love and holiness. It is a diminution, too, which reacts on the parents; for since they have wilfully lessened the number of subjects of faith and love and holiness, they have wilfully lessened their own faith and love and holiness. They have lessened the chances of their own salvation. But letting nature have its way, they contribute to their own eternal welfare, they contribute to the collective eternal welfare of the race, they contribute to the greater glory of God.

Some apology is needed for even venturing to speak of the abuse of matrimony, and the apology which is offered is the only permissible one, namely, absolute necessity. The evil is widespread and is still growing. If it is to be counteracted, it must be counteracted both by the private good living of individuals and by the formation of a good public opinion. Non-Catholics now speak openly and without any sense of shame of their small families and of their intention of having only small families. Advertisements of the most pernicious nature are flaunted openly in the newspapers. Books are published, the aim of which is to propagate and to make the evil as easily accessible as possible. Seeing then the high ideal of matrimony which the Catholic Church sets before the world, she must of necessity look with special horror on an abuse which does away with the primary end for which matrimony was instituted. Therefore, it is that her preachers have to speak out when they would fain keep silence. And, therefore, it is that every Catholic should set his face against all approval or toleration of the abuse. A few practical suggestions then are offered which may serve to indicate the attitude which Catholics ought to assume when questions concerning this matter arise. The first is to keep clearly before one's mind the fact that the law of nature, the law of God and the law of the Church all condemn any wilful interference with the due course of nature. A second is to protest vigorously against any opinions approving of such when proposed in conversation. A third is to boycott all newspapers, books and business houses which make a trade in providing the means for

the pernicious practise. A fourth is to take a holy pride in a large family of well-brought-up Catholic children. Natural motives as well as supernatural motives may be used for this end. Natural as well as supernatural motives have been proposed in this consideration. But natural motives alone will not suffice. A premium provided by the State for every seventh child will not hinder the decrease of population. Christian principles must be made the foundation of society life; that is, the family life must be governed by Catholic faith and Catholic morality. And if natural motives are offered and used it is only that they may be added to the strictly supernatural ones and that they may be directed to a supernatural end and thus become themselves supernaturalized.

# XXIX. THE SACRAMENT OF MARRIAGE

BY THE REV. THOMAS J. GERRARD

## VIII. Catholic Education

"Train up a child in the way he should go and he will not depart from it."

*SYNOPSIS.—Introduction.—Importance of education because of its influence on after life, temporal and eternal.*

*I. Nature and aim of Catholic education. Definition of education; formation of habits. Erudition not education. All the powers of the soul must be trained. A healthy mind requires a healthy body. The supernatural end of man requires a training in spirituality. The relation of secular to religious education. The spiritual man can not be satisfied with merely secular education. Immoral to leave a child to choose its own religion. Catholic education should avail itself of secular subjects. The perfection of the natural faculties tends to the perfection of the supernatural life. Piety and intellectual proficiency not incompatible, but mutually helpful to each other.*

*II. The administration of Catholic education; the relationship between (a) the school and the family, (b) the school and the State, (c) the school and the Church. The children belong, under God, to the parents and not to the State. The State exists for temporal interests, and therefore can compel a temporal education in so far as spiritual interests are not interfered with. Parents' authority over children not absolute, but relative to the divine Will, made manifest through the Church. The teacher holds the place of the parents, carrying out their duties with due regard to the claims of Church and State. The principle is compatible both with monarchical and democratic forms of government. In case of a clash between the claimants the Catholic parent follows the Catholic episcopate.*

*III. The teacher's point of view. He may be engaged separately by parent, or by Church, or by State, or he may be engaged by Church and State combined. He must keep to the terms of his engagement, but keep the ideal of family life in view. He is primarily in loco parentis. If a religious he is not to make religious vocations the chief end of the school, but rather the perfection of family life. Day colleges the ideal of St. Ignatius. Boarding colleges should approximate to the Catholic home. The training of the future mother.*

*Conclusion.—Some practical hints on the choice of a school and of the parents' conduct after choice, (a) toward the school, (b) toward the Church.*

The science of education is still young. What is known as "method" in education has made its best development in comparatively recent years. And one of the chief characteristics of this new science is that the best masters should be appointed to the youngest classes. It used to be thought anyone who knew figures and

letters could teach the same to a class of babies. But now it has been discovered that the teacher must not only know all about letters and figures, but also all about babies. He must be skilled in the psychology of the child mind. The young intellect may be made or marred forever according as its first operations are well or ill directed. The boy is the father of the man. The results of child training reach out into youth, manhood, old age, and life eternal. Hence the greatest importance is to be attached to the education of children. Thus it is that educationists are realizing ever more and more the rich content of the principle, "Train up a child in the way he should go and he will not depart from it." If this is true of education in general, it is eminently true of Catholic education in particular. The future of the Catholic Church in any country depends on the Catholic education of the children. "Give me the children of England and I will make England Catholic." That was one of the favorite sentiments of the late Cardinal Manning. And as so much concerning Catholic education pertains to family life, all Catholic parents ought to know the leading principles. In the field of politics the education of the people plays a very important role. And in scarcely any country of the world does the Church have its full desire in the matter. It nevertheless continues to work for its ideal, a completely Catholic education for every Catholic child.

Education, in the best sense of the word, is the formation of habits. The formation of good habits is good education. The formation of bad habits is bad education. Education is not merely the acquisition of knowledge. The necessity of examination, especially competitive examinations, is largely responsible for the impression which identifies erudition and education. Mere erudition, however, is only a small part of education. It pertains to the faculty of memory. Now, the memory must be trained, but not only the memory. All the powers of the child must be brought out to the highest perfection possible. Its intellect must be trained to perceive the truth. Its senses, internal and external, must be trained to perceive what is beautiful. And, above all, its will must be trained to do what is good. Moreover, since the soul, while in this life, depends on the body for its due operation, the body also must be so trained as to keep in a healthy condition. "A sound mind in a sound body" is an axiom as old as the hills. A training in the fundamental laws of hygiene, therefore, is ministrant to

the training of the child's intellectual, aesthetical, and moral faculties.

Further, since man is destined to an eternal life and must attain that eternal life through a life of the spirit in this world, all his natural powers must be made ministrant to this spiritual life. His bodily health, his habits of memory, feeling, taste, intellect, and will must be so trained and directed as to bring forth the best possible fruits in the spiritual life. The supernatural is that which is built on the natural, not that which is built up in mid-air above—separated from the natural. The two merge, one into the other, in such a way that the natural becomes supernaturalized, the psychic becomes spiritualized. In modern parlance the training of the natural faculties, without regard to their supernatural destiny, is called secular education. It is an education adapted merely to the affairs of this world. On the other hand, the training of the natural faculties, with a view to their supernatural destiny, is called religious education. It is an education adapted to the life of the spirit both here and hereafter.

From the foregoing fact certain principles follow which have an important bearing on present-day educational questions. If man is destined to an eternal life, then he cannot be satisfied with a merely secular education. If grace is ever playing around nature and spiritualizing it, then under such circumstances, nature will not be satisfied with merely natural occupations and interests. Being spiritualized by a supernatural gift, it must seek a supernatural end and live a supernatural life. A father, then, who leaves a child to choose its own religion and make its first efforts in spirituality only in after years does the child a grievous wrong. What should we say of a father who only taught his child to walk and did not teach it to use its hands, on the assumption that it would learn that better in its age of discretion? Yet, that, and something worse, is what the father does when he leaves the child to choose its own religion. He leaves its spiritual limbs undeveloped, rudimentary, useless. And, since to the Catholic the Catholic religion is the divinely appointed means by which the spiritual life is developed, the Catholic father does his child a grievous wrong if he does not provide it with the best Catholic education possible.

Again, if on the one hand secular education ought to be spiritualized by the Catholic faith, on the other hand Catholic education should avail itself of the advantages of secular subjects. The Catho-

lic religion being the revelation of Truth itself must appeal to the faculty which has truth for its object. Being a reasonable religion it must appeal to the reason. The more the reason is cultivated, therefore, the better is it able to apprehend the divine revelation. If, as some educationists hold, Euclid and Latin composition are the best means of making a boy think, then proficiency in Euclid and Latin composition must be a help in giving the boy a grasp of his religion. Again, the Catholic religion is the religion of the highest morality. It is the religion which is marked out above all others by its fruitfulness in moral goodness, its production of saints. It must, therefore, appeal to that faculty which has goodness for its object. It must appeal to the will as affording it the widest arena for its exercise and satisfaction, nothing less than the striving for the perfect imitation of Jesus Christ. It must appeal to the will also as affording it the strength to arrive at moral perfection, the strength which comes through the grace of the seven Sacraments. The stronger, then, a man's will is, the more perfectly it is exercised in the natural virtues, so much the more fitted is it to avail itself of the helps to supernatural action. Once more the Catholic religion is a beautiful religion. It must, therefore, appeal to the faculty which has beauty for its object, the esthetic sense. All sound training in the fine arts, therefore, whether in music, painting, or literature may be used for the development of the finest and most difficult of all arts, the art of saintliness, the art which absorbs at once all the power of intellect,will and feeling, the art which expresses the greatest inspirations of truth, goodness and beauty.

Much too often do we hear people talk as if piety and intellectual proficiency were incompatible accomplishments. Ability in the arts and sciences is supposed to be an occasion of intellectual pride. So it is. The piety, however, which affects to despise these gifts of God is the occasion of a worse sin, the sin of spiritual pride. The natural as well as the supernatural is the creation of Almighty God. And if the Catholic school is to fulfil its mission it must aim at proficiency in the natural as well as the supernatural, in the natural for the sake of the supernatural.

The high aim and nature of Catholic education postulates some important principles in its administration. We come now to consider, then, the relationships between the school and the family, the school and the Church, the school and the State. The schoolmaster, the parent, the bishop and the statesman all have something

to say in the matter of the conduct of the Catholic school. The question is complicated, admits of different opinions as to details, and, therefore, can not be solved offhand or dogmatically. There are, however, certain leading principles about which the Catholic can have no doubt and which he must keep clearly before his mind in his efforts to adjust the various claims.

The first and most important principle is that the children belong to the parent under God. They do not belong to the State. Certain States, or rather certain statesmen, claim this right of possession. The Catholic can never admit it. The parents are the authors of the child's body and the parents' wills are the occasion of the creation of the child's soul. The parents, therefore, have confided to their care the nourishment and the education of their children. The mother is fitted by nature for the bearing, the nursing and the education of children in their earliest years. The father is fitted by nature for providing for the maintenance of all during these years, and providing for the continuance of the education in after years. The State has nothing whatever to do with the possession of the children. The State exists for the welfare of the temporal interests of the nation. If, therefore, the temporal interests of the nation demand a certain standard of education in the youth of the nation, the State has the right to require such an education from the parents. And in default of the parents fulfilling this obligation, the State has a right to administer such education itself. In doing so, however, it must respect the higher interests of religion. The children belong to the parents under God. The parents, therefore, have the right to dictate to the State as to the religion in which the children are to be brought up. The parents, moreover, if they are Catholics, have the duty of submitting to the guidance of the Church in the adjusting of the religious and secular claims.

The conditions of present-day society make it generally convenient that the State should provide at least the elementary, and for the most part, the secondary and higher education of the country. The fact of the government being democratic or monarchical makes no difference to the Catholic principle. Both are compatible with the Catholic principle. Whether as a representative body carrying out the will of the people, or as an absolute monarch carrying out his own will, the ruling body has only the right to administer secular education in so far as it is compatible with the religious education of the children. So long as this principle is saved, there may

be much give and take on both sides. The parents must reserve to themselves the right to say what religion shall be taught to the children.

The parents, however, are not absolute masters of their own children. The Power who created all men has the possession of all men. The parents, therefore, must educate their children according to the will of God. To the Catholic this means that he must be guided by the Church. Governments, however, do not treat with individuals, but with representatives of all. Individual members of parliament or congress treat with individual Catholics at election time. That is the opportunity for the Catholic's action, but even then it must be according to the advice of the bishop. But when it comes to a conference between the State as a body and the Church as a body, then the bishops assume their right to say what are the Church's requirements. Catholic statesmen have no right whatever to make terms with governments, except with the consent and under the direction of the episcopate.

Owing to the diversity of religions and diversity of races, nearly every country in the world holds a different arrangement between the Church and the State. So the Catholic teacher often finds it difficult to adjust the claims of the various parties which in different degrees he represents. He may be engaged directly by the parent, as in the case of a private tutor or governess; or by the State, as in the State schools of America; or by the Church, as in the Catholic schools of America and colleges of higher education in England; or by both State and Church combined, as in the denominational schools in England. And when he enters into his engagement he is bound in honor to keep to the terms of his engagement. In most cases, however, he is allowed a certain amount of freedom. It is the head teacher of the school who gives the tone to the school. It is well, then, that he should keep before his mind the ideal at which he ought to aim in so far as is consistent with the terms of his engagement. It is well that Catholics who have a vote in his appointment should have this ideal before their minds. And it is well that non-Catholics should have the Catholic ideal set before them. Now the chief characteristic of this ideal is that the teacher, whether he be paid by the parents or by the Church or by the State, is primarily and essentially continuing the work of the parents and not directly that of the Church or of the State. The very existence of the teacher depends only on the assumption of

the parents not being able to carry out the work of education themselves. Of course, in so far as the parents are bound to act under the direction of the Church or the State, so is the teacher. But directly his ideal is to carry out the work which essentially belongs to the parents and which they can not conveniently perform without him.

The Catholic school, therefore, since it is merely a continuation of the family life, and exists merely to help the family to fulfil its destiny, will have its spirit and tone and plans arranged accordingly. Its first principle will be to aim at training the children for future family life. Schools taught by religious or clergy are not primarily schools for religious or priestly vocations. Doubtless it is the duty of such religious and clergy to watch carefully for vocations and to see that no hindrance is put in the way. But they must ever remember that a vocation is an extraordinary gift, whilst marriage is a Sacrament and intended for the generality of men. A school, therefore, whether fitted for elementary, middle or higher education, whether taught by religious or laity, should be characterized by its likeness to family life. When St. Ignatius conceived and formulated his idea of Jesuit colleges, he did not intend those wonderful boarding establishments, such as Stonyhurst and Beaumont, Georgetown and Fordham. He wished to have day colleges so that the pupils should remain as much as possible under the direct influence of parents and home. But boarding colleges and convent schools are now a necessity. There is, however, a more stringent obligation on them of approximating as nearly as possible to the family ideal. This is more especially necessary in the schools for girls. The prevailing spirit of these schools should be that of training the future mothers of Catholic families. The mother is the priestess of the home. She it is who holds the home together. She is the all-important factor in developing the ideal of Catholic family life. Personal piety will be her first accomplishment. Then will come the ordinary school subjects with "extras," according to the future social status of the child. Then she must be taught how to play. We have hardly yet begun to learn the gospel of Froebel: "Let us teach our children to play." Cricket and tennis and drill have their place, and so has the doll and the doll's house. Then, as the school years draw to an end there are the important subjects of cookery and housekeeping. The Catholic school that neglects these fails to grasp one of its grandest oppor-

tunities of furthering its noble aims; that is, of strengthening the family life, of making the nation more Catholic, of hastening the coming of the kingdom of God.

From the foregoing principles there follow some practical conclusions. Parents will first strive to realize that, since the education of children primarily belongs to them, and only by delegation to the teachers, they, the parents, have the obligation of seeking out the most suitable school for their children. The nearest school is not necessarily the most suitable. Nor is the cheapest. The school must first of all be Catholic. Then, in the case of elementary education, the school of the parish or mission will generally be found to be efficient. The elementary school of one's own mission, therefore, has the first claim upon a parent's consideration. In the case of middle class or higher education, the parents will choose by preference a day high school or college. Then if the circumstances of the family require a boarding-school or college, the idea of home-life will receive the chief consideration. If the future circumstances of the children are such that they can dispense with examinations, then a school which is exempt from public examinations is better than one subject to them. The majority of children, however, require paper qualifications for their start in professional studies. The Catholic parent need have no fear whatever as to the proficiency of Catholic schools in securing excellent results at examinations. Having used their utmost discretion in the choice of a school, the parents will do well not to meddle with the teacher. An obvious irregularity may arise, in which case it is the parents' duty to act. But, generally speaking, the head master or the head mistress of the school must be trusted to do what is best for the child. To change the school, even once unnecessarily, is to set back the child's education. To be ever taking the child's part against the teacher is simply to ruin the child's character. Lastly, if the children are to be educated by a private governess, then the parents must form the habit of mind, and the children and the governess herself must feel it, that she is, as a member of the family, strictly *in loco parentis,* entitled to deep respect and consideration. She is not called in as a household drudge, but as one even more qualified than the parents themselves to fulfil their high vocation of forming the characters of children, of making them Catholic in mind and in heart, of leading them to their eternal destiny.

The same principle of parental responsibility holds good with regard to ecclesiastical authorities who undertake the burden of providing a Catholic education for Catholic families. If the State so far neglects its duty, that the Church has to provide elementary schools, then the parents ought to support these schools generously. It is not right to allow the priest to go and beg, beg, beg to support a work which is essentially the work of parents. So, too, with the high schools and colleges. It ought to be quite unnecessary to say it, yet under the circumstances one must say it, parents ought to pay their school bills regularly and promptly. The work done by such schools and colleges is infinitely more valuable than the money outlay for their material support. It is the least that parents can do to see that the work is not hampered by what so frequently happens, the accumulation of bad debts. The work is God's work, and those who are primarily responsible for it are the parents of families. They have received the Sacrament of Marriage. They have received the graces to bear its burdens. It is not an easy state of life. But with the graces which the Sacrament confers the married pair are made strong for all exigencies, temporal as well as spiritual.

## XXX. THE STATE OF WEALTH

BY THE RIGHT REV. JAMES BELLORD, D.D.

"Blessed is the rich man that is found without blemish, and that hath not gone after gold, nor put his trust in money nor in treasures."—Eccles. xxxi, 8.

*SYNOPSIS.—I. The importance of the problem—where the solution is to be found.*

*II. The nature and origin of the state of wealth.*

*III. God wills this inequality of state; hence, the basis for social harmony must be found in the Christian theory of the world and human life.*

*IV. The observance of the natural and spiritual laws would produce this much-coveted harmony. The responsibility of the rich—the real use of riches—the abuse of the same. The evil consequences of the neglect of the Christian law, and the will of God in this matter.*

I. The relation of riches and poverty is a most anxious problem at this day, and around it the most furious contentions rage. The growth of poverty and with it of discontent is one of the most threatening dangers to society. Wealth, too, is itself a danger; for its shameful abuse has evoked the great movement toward a social revolution. The line of wealth and poverty divides mankind into two great bodies, hostile to one another, and arming for the movement of deadly struggle. Christian union and social union are alike in danger of disruption, and beyond that looms the reign of rapine and violence.

The solution of social problems lies with religion alone. If a machine is to run properly we must understand its nature and treat it accordingly: apply it to purposes or use it in ways not provided for in its construction and it will do more harm than good. In social questions it is never to be forgotten that God is the author of social, as well as of the material order of things; that to understand and use them properly we must consider what was the intention of divine Providence in instituting them; that their first object is to glorify God by the salvation of souls; and that the revelation through Jesus Christ is meant to renew mankind socially as well as spiritually. The present pass to which things have come between rich and poor is not due to any natural hostility between the two states, but to the fact that rich and poor have forgotten the princi-

ples just stated. The two conditions are ordained by God and are intended to serve a common purpose, the evolution of human society; and they would work harmoniously together were it not that their nature is misunderstood, and that they are misused.

There are two views, the Christian and the unchristian, about riches and poverty; they are diametrically opposed to one another, and so produce opposite results. The materialist view of the world in general is, that wealth is the *summum bonum,* the one thing desirable, the adequate object of all human endeavors, the measure of success, and of a man's value and usefulness in life. It is the first duty of every man, therefore, to seek incessantly for wealth, to grasp all he can of it, to expend all his energies upon it. It is a man's own when he gets it, he owes none of it to anyone, he is under no responsibility for its use, he may do exactly as he pleases with it; and the best thing he can do with it is to employ it for the accumulation of still more wealth, even beyond his extremest requirements. This idea becomes the rule and measure of everything; the education of the young is arranged according to this view of human life and duties; the movements of the world, the growth of populations, the advance of civilization, are all regarded in their relation to the making of money.

When all men, rich and poor alike, are fully imbued with a fierce desire for wealth there follows a fierce struggle for the possession of it; and of this the usual result is that the strong appropriate much more than their due share, while the weak are trampled under foot, and hardly secure even the minimum which, as men, they are entitled to receive from the soil they live on. Then follow mutual jealousy, suspicion, hatred. Each class stands on the watch to take advantage of the other; each regards the other as its most dangerous foe. With the rich there is no security, with the poor there is no contentment with their lot.

It is evident that social warfare of this kind is not a pleasant, or an economical way of maintaining one's rights and settling disputed points; and doctrinaires then set to work on new systems for the reorganization of society. Projects are devised, all more or less unchristian, all more or less ignoring the facts of human nature, and, therefore, anti-social and impracticable. Vain hopes are excited, beautiful impossibilities are proposed to men's expectations, all to be disappointed. The object generally aimed at is to destroy all inequalities of every kind between man and man. To carry this

out some want to abolish poverty and make all men rich; others would abolish wealth and have every man to toil for his daily bread; in either case all temporal goods would be divided among all the population, and there would no longer exist the division of classes into rich and poor. By means of certain panaceas—education, co-operation, free trade or protection, industrial and social changes, carried out either by violent revolution or by quieter legislation—it is expected that a new epoch of universal harmony, and abundance and contentment will be brought about. But some deeper and more stable foundation is required for so great an edifice. Legislation is not omnipotent, violence begets unending violence; uniformity of system is not to be enforced from without on millions of men of a hundred different nationalities. The religion of Jesus Christ, working in the hearts of men by divine grace, can alone supply a principle, universal, deep-rooted, powerful enough to unite all classes into one brotherhood.

We have now to cast upon this subject the bright light of Christian doctrine and of God's ordinances in society, and we shall see that the distinction of classes into rich and poor is of divine appointment and economically unavoidable. We shall consider the nature of poverty and wealth and the providential purposes of each; and we shall learn that if those of each class would bow their necks to the yoke of religion and guide their lives by Christian principle, warfare between them would cease, their interests would be reconciled, and a harmony of mutual usefulness would be established.

II. We have first to consider the nature and the origin of the state of wealth.

The raw material of all wealth comes only from the earth on which we live. It consists of the things we use for food, clothing, lodging, adornment, amusement. It consists in the harvests of corn and fruit, the wood of the forests, coal, iron, gold, clay, minerals generally, the beasts that are nourished by the earth, the fish that are produced in the sea. The laboring classes extract this wealth; they then transport it from place to place, they work it up into the forms required for its use, into bread, and clothing, and houses, and the rest; and thus they add to it a value much beyond that of the raw products.

Each man can produce much more than the value which he expends on his own maintenance, but still not enough to make him rich. If each man could keep all that he produces, and no more

than what he himself produces, no one could grow very rich. A man becomes rich only when he begins to employ labor of other men, and when he is enabled to appropriate to himself the difference between what his workmen earn and what it costs to keep them; *i. e.*, the difference between their wages and the total value of their work. A man who works alone in his own shop or his own patch of ground will not earn a great deal more than his living. He begins to get rich when he employs many journeymen, and can by their assistance open many shops or cultivate many fields. The surplus earnings of these laborers are what makes him rich. A man may have large estates, mills, machinery, but he can draw no large income from them unless he has a number of other men to work them for him and earn wealth for him. Thus the worker retains only a part of what he produces, and out of the surplus he creates and maintains the class of wealthy men. So it is not the rich who support the poor by giving them employment, but it is the poor who support the rich by gratuitous labor, by labor over and above the quantity they have been paid for. In whatever way a man has acquired his fortune, whether it be by inheritance, by speculation, or by highly paid services, such as those of the physician, the jockey, the judge, the prizefighter, by the labor of slaves or serfs, or workmen, it is always true that the abundance he enjoys comes from the surplus unpaid labor of those who originally extracted wealth from the earth.

It takes the surplus labor of a great many men to produce a large, regular income. For every rich man there must be a much larger number of poor men working for him. The more rich men there are, and the larger the fortunes of the rich, so much more numerous must be those who labor and are poor. So it is physically impossible that all men should be rich; it is physically impossible that the rich should be more than a small proportion of the whole community. It is conceivable that all men should be poor; it is possible, under proper social arrangements, that all men should have work and sufficient earnings for decent and happy lives; but it is not conceivable that all men, or even that a majority of men, should become positively rich.

If fortunes increase enormously it means that more men are working for each rich man; if the number of rich becomes disproportionately large, it means that poor men have been working harder and producing more, or else that a larger proportion of their

earnings is taken from them, and that so much the less is left to each. As a matter of fact, both these things take place in a country where wealth is increasing. Returns then show that there are so many more men who have so much larger incomes; but this advance is not due entirely to a greater production of wealth; a considerable portion is only a transfer to the rich of certain wealth which previously went to the poor, and which they ought still to possess. The interest on investments has gone up, the price of labor has gone down, as the phrase goes. Thus it is that the increase of wealth is always accompanied by an increase of poverty, and that the inordinate greed of men and their inordinate accumulations are one large cause of inordinate misery.

III. Political economy thus explains the relations of wealth and poverty, but there it leaves the matter; it does not justify these relations, it brings no comfort to those who suffer by them. On the contrary, it excites at once a bitter sense of wrong and a desire to resist and rectify it, if necessary by violence. The toiler will ask, "Why should I not enjoy all the fruits of my labor? By what right can another appropriate any share of my earnings to himself? Is it not sheer robbery—violent robbery to become supported by the strength of the law—that a man who produces nothing should live in the height of luxury on my labor, while I, the creator of this wealth, get as my share only the bare necessities of life? Why should not I recover my own by violence as soon as I get the chance?"

And indeed if the world's theory about wealth were correct there would be no answer to the discontented worker. If there were no God dispensing temporal things according to His will, and no future life for compensation and reward; if this world were the only one, and wealth the only source of happiness and all good; if there were no revelation of God in religion; then indeed the unequal distribution of worldly goods would be a most violent injustice, to be rectified by all men or each as best they could. It would be impossible then to ask the poor to accept their lot with contentment and make the best of it. The only answer to their complaints would be, that those who have intend to keep, and that they who object shall be crushed.

There is no basis for social harmony apart from the recognition of the Christian theory about the world and human life. Religion solves the difficulty with one word, *"Deus vult"*—God wills it. He

is supreme. He owes nought to any man. He can dispense His gifts as He will; and however He assigns them He can do no injustice. What we create by our industry is really God's creation, and is held by us from His free bounty. From this view the poor man will derive contentment, the rich man security, and both of them harmony in their diversities.

It was the will of God that poverty should be the prevalent condition of men. The majority must toil in the sweat of their brow for their daily bread. To the Israelites Moses said: "There will not be wanting poor in the land of thy habitation; therefore, I command thee to open thy hand to thy needy and poor brother that liveth in the land" (Deut. xv, ii). And to us Christ says, "The poor you have always with you" (Matt. xxvi, 11). The same law is written by God on the face of the world as clearly as in revelation. The multitudes of mankind must of necessity labor hard for their daily bread, and many of them must of necessity fall behind in the struggle and become dependent on the charity of their brethren. Each man has a natural right to sufficiency for decent life, and God has made that provision for every one by means partly of His natural and partly of His religious laws. But no man has the right to complain that God is more bountiful to others than to him. It is no injustice if God calls one to higher functions than another, and assigns a superabundance to one man and bare sufficiency to another. He manifests His perfections in the infinite variety of His works; and in the world of men there must be varieties of spiritual and temporal endowment, and varieties of condition, in order that they may carry out varieties of duty and of virtue.

Men are called to different states through the operation of natural causes. There are endless diversities of character, some personal and some national, of bodily strength and of talent; some of these are inherited, some developed by our own action. Hence rise special aptitudes for command or obedience, for working or organizing work, for inventing, for accumulating. Some can render service, which, though not productive, make the labors of other men more productive—services of one hour which are worth the produce of twenty hours of manual labor. Some are able to supply workmen with the consumable wealth which they need for each day in exchange for a larger amount of unconsumable wealth which they have created. Others by concentrating the efforts of many men, or by the use of inventions, can acquire a larger profit than the

workers could gain unaided for themselves. Some again can grant facilities to others for using their powers. Men who are better endowed in any way than certain others thus obtain the command and control of their labor; they render certain services which are paid for not by the wealth which they themselves create, but by rights acquired over the wealth which others have created beyond their own actual needs. Men of superior endowments will generally, even without fraud, secure to themselves larger gains than those who are of inferior ability and acquirements. Those whose energies are not applied directly to production, will receive more than those who are directly engaged in producing. The fund which enriches those who do not produce can not be any other than what is created by the producers. It is in the very nature of things that this should be the case. It is then by a natural and, therefore, just law, that some grow rich on the wealth that others have produced.

Thus it is that God calls some out of the multitudes of men to the privileges and responsibilities of wealth, and assigns for their maintenance a large portion of the earnings of other men. In this there is no injustice. Men are not the creators and absolute owners of the wealth which they produce. Their labor is not the cause of it, but only the condition in consideration of which God gives the harvest out of His free benevolence. God is the creator and owner of it. He can assign it to whomsoever He will. No one can claim more than is necessary for life and salvation hereafter; and he who has a sufficiency for these purposes can not justly complain against God or the order of things that He has appointed. If God give more out of His treasury to certain ones, there is inequality indeed, but He has wronged no man, He has done as He wished with His own.

IV. God being the God of peace and not of disorder, His kingdom being one not divided against itself, we may be sure that, as He has created different classes, the normal relations between these must be of harmony and not of warfare. The natural laws of God in the world, supplemented by the spiritual law of Christ, are sufficient, if duly observed, to secure due harmony between the different states of mankind and turn their inequalities to the joint advantage of both.

God has called certain persons to the state of power and wealth, not through their own deserts or for their own advantage, but in order that they might render special services to Him and to human society. Their position has not been given to them to excite

them to arrogance and contempt of others, nor to enable them to live apart from the rush of the world's work in a serene, lofty, exclusive sphere of their own. Their power is not given to them that they may oppress the poor, or combine to increase their own wealth by robbing the toilers, or exact from them a larger return than their labor produces, or create solitudes for their own pleasures by casting out hundreds and refusing them the right to live and labor and draw their sustenance from their mother earth. Their wealth is not given to them in absolute irresponsible ownership to be hoarded up or squandered as caprice and extravagance may dictate. They are stewards and trustees rather than owners of their wealth. They are accountable to God and man for the proper and unselfish use of the advantages they have received. The civil laws at times restrain a man's ownership in the interest of his family or his fellow citizens; the divine law puts a restraint on ownership, under eternal penalties, in the interests of God and human society.

The rich are bound to be moderate in the enjoyment of their wealth and to restrain the excess of their desires, remembering that as men they, like the poor, have no absolute claim to more than is sufficient for good and decent life. They are not indeed bound to live as do the poor; they may allow themselves many things as suitable to their station, which would be superfluity and luxury to many other men, for "Thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out thy corn on the floor" (Deut. xxv, 4). But any excessive extravagance is a sinful misappropriation of goods not their own.

Further, a considerable amount of wealth ought to go back to the classes from whom it originally came; and that not in the wages of ordinary circulation—value given for value received—but as a tribute due. Turning to nature we find the rivers bringing down their treasure of limpid water to be lost in the ocean; but the sea returns it all, giving it up first in vapors to the clouds to be deposited on the mountains, which again feed the river heads. The earth yearly gives up to us its wealth in food for the myriad armies of man and beast and bird; but the energy which has gone forth from it has to be restored in labor and irrigation and fertilization. So is it with the rich man. He receives from the community many privileges which he has not earned, he receives without an equivalent the fruits of the surplus labor of many of his fellow men; he has received artificial rights to those fruits, created by the laws and continued long after the original justification for them had ceased.

He receives special protection in his numerous rights over and above what is accorded to others. These benefits should not all be absolved without return. He has received from the social system certain energies of wealth, position, education; it is contrary to the course of nature that these should be lost in selfishness; they should be conserved, transformed and rendered back in the shape of other energies of service to the community. This service, whether personal or in the form of wealth bestowed, is for the rich man, the fulfilment of the law of labor, utility and progress, which binds all men. He owes it as a debt, without further remuneration, because he has already received his remuneration in advance. He owes it, too, as part compensation to the poor for their self-denial in yielding quickly up to him so large a proportion of their labor without an equivalent. This return to the community is not a matter of free benevolence; still less is it a pittance to be flung disdainfully to importunate suppliants, dishonoring at once giver and receiver and the sacred name of charity; but it is demanded by rigid justice. If only this were recognized and carried out, then peace and mutual benefit would result from the diversities in human life, instead of the present warfare and mutual injury.

The world, however, refuses to admit the Christian view about wealth, and the Christian laws that control its use. Evil consequences have followed in abundance and they have begotten a further progeny of evil which has multiplied till it is beyond human remedy. A state of things has arisen which is not defensible on any principles of religion or political economy, and which is contrary to the intentions of divine Providence and the laws of nature and society. Instead of mankind being divided into two moderate states of wealth and poverty, harmonious and beneficial each to the other, we find on the one hand fortunes of overwhelming magnitude, too great for enjoyment, useless almost to their owners or spent in the wildest extravagance; and on the other hand, instead of mere poverty, depths of horrible destitution and suffering, resulting from the misuse of wealth. By the action of man, overthrowing the designs of Providence, millions have been robbed of their natural rights, and of the share which God intended them to draw from the common stock. Society at large has, by rejecting the principles of Christianity, become guilty of all the wrongs, the crimes, the destruction of temporal and eternal life among the disinherited millions. "He that taketh away the bread gotten by sweat is like

him that killeth his neighbor. He that sheddeth blood and he that defraudeth the laborer of his hire are brothers" (Eccles. xxxiv, 26, 27). The blood of thousands cries aloud to God for vengeance on the society that has slain them and God makes answer: "Revenge is mine, and I will repay them in due time, that their foot may slide; the day of destruction is at hand, and the time makes haste to come" (Deut xxxii, 35).

## XXXI. THE STATE OF POVERTY

BY THE RIGHT REV. JAMES BELLORD, D.D.

"Cursed is the earth in thy work; with labor and toil shalt thou eat thereof all the days of thy life, . . . in the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread till thou return to the earth out of which thou wast taken."—Gen. iii, 17, 19.

*SYNOPSIS.—I. The origin of poverty in its true sense. Scriptural evidence as to the state and dignity of the mystery of poverty.*

*II. The view the world takes of poverty; the absurdity of this position.*

*III. The dignity of poverty—(a) Our Lord sanctified it; (b) Poor are the favorites of God; (c) It forces the soul upon God; (d) It shows forth eloquently the providence of God; (e) It is a safe and sure school of virtue; (f) Makes the soul long for the real, true, eternal life; (g) Unites the soul to God by resignation.*

*IV. This state has a good effect upon the world. (1) It tends to vivify the social system; (2) Is the producer and distributer of wealth; (3) Enables man to subdue and rule over the earth; (4) Saves from corruption and degeneration; (5) Helps the rich to save their souls.*

*V. Poverty then is, according to the Christian view, a state of economical and spiritual benefit to man. The world looks upon it as an evil; the fruitless efforts of the world to get rid of poverty. The effects of the Christian view. (a) Causes respect for the poor; (b) Shows the real dignity of labor; (c) Tends to maintain the equality of mankind.*

I. These words are the institution of the state of poverty. They are words of wrath and terror; the sentence of lasting punishment on man for his great transgression. As he revolted against God, so the earth, which had been subject to his dominion, revolted against him, no longer producing its wealth spontaneously, but requiring long and painful labor. Toil involves poverty; they are correlative, always associated. Men work because they are hungry, or because they fear to be so. He who must needs work daily for his daily bread, who has no reserve laid by to live upon, who has little leisure, but who can provide himself with the necessaries and decencies of life, he is poor in the sense in which God has appointed poverty with toil to be the lot of mankind. For the present we speak of poverty in this limited sense, and not of that depth of awful misery now so common, of absolute destitution both of food and work, which goes improperly by the name of poverty, but is rather the State of Misery.

Ordinary poverty, which is associated with labor, that is what the

text speaks of. It is poverty in this moderate sense—a poverty which is really sufficiency—that was laid by God as a curse, and as the punishment of Adam's sin on the human race; and not that state of destitution and degradation, produced by our civilization, and wrongly though usually described by the sacred name of Poverty.

In the opening chapters of the New Testament we find poverty again. When Our Lord opened His mouth to deliver the New Law upon the Mount, His first words were: "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." Poverty since then is no longer a curse, but the first of the beatitudes, provided that it is something deeper than mere external poverty, and is willingly embraced and turned to good purpose.

Here are two very different aspects of poverty, set forth in Scripture itself. There is a mystery in poverty; it is important that we understand it. Poverty is a divine fact; it is one of the most important facts in the social system; it is one of the most serious problems and needs the most careful treatment. Because the divine secret hidden in it has not been understood; it has become a most fertile source of disunion, and a threatening danger in the future. It was well said by David: "Blessed is he that understandeth concerning the needy and the poor" (Ps. xl, 1). This is a special gift of God. He who instituted poverty is the sole source of true information about it. The right understanding of it comes only from religion.

II. The world, the contemner of God, has not merited the blessedness of understanding concerning the poor and the needy. It has been grievously mistaken about the function of poverty in the order of things. It estimates poverty as God estimates sin; as the greatest of evils, the most contemptible of conditions, a thing to be feared, hated, and, if possible, destroyed. Every effort is directed to the avoidance of poverty and the gaining of riches. To be rich is to be happy and esteemed. If a man be rich all is pardoned to him; if he be poor, his offenses meet severe punishment and his virtues will hardly gain him respect. The modern view does not differ very widely from the view of old paganism. There is not so much wanton cruelty inflicted on the lower classes, but as wide a gulf as ever separates them from their superiors. The poor man is no longer bought and sold, but in many places, notably great cities, he suffers more than the misery, the degradation, the

grinding toil of the old slavery. The state of poverty is not recognized for what it really is, one of the constituent parts of the social system. It is not taken account of and assigned its duties and its rights in the body politic, but it is considered rather an excrescence, a deformity, a failure. Still less do men recognize the higher position that religion gives it as an object for our veneration, tenderness and desire. They regard it as an annoying tax on them; they relieve it grudgingly to keep it quiet, and to prevent its squalor becoming too publicly scandalous, and disturbing the enjoyments of the rich. Rich and poor are alike trained to hate and escape from poverty. Nothing could be more incomprehensible to them than the idea of renouncing wealth in order to embrace poverty as a greater good. The gospel of the world is: "Blessed are the rich."

At first sight there may seem to be much reason in the view the world takes. Our first duty, right, destiny is to live. Life is not mere existence, it is exercising our faculties, using and enjoying the world. Does the poor man live? Does he exercise and enjoy his own life and other life? He is cut off from science and art—two of the great needs of the soul—from knowledge, and from the enjoyment of the beautiful; he does not even understand them enough to desire them. He knows nothing of nature, of the great world with all its wonders and delights. Thousands are cut off from the enjoyment even of God's sunshine and the pure fresh air, and from the restful, soothing sight of country landscape and of open sea. They are imprisoned in narrow, grimy streets, in dark workshops or mines, limited to one round of monotonous, mechanical work. These conditions cramp and lower the whole of life. There is no leisure, no cultivation, no refinement, no intellectual resource; none of the many interests that absorb the mind; no apprehension of anything brighter or nobler than their sordid surroundings. The lives of the poor are altogether on a lower level than the lives of the rich. There is so much less of life and of humanity in them. They lead rather the lives of vegetables than of free intelligences, with capacities that only infinite greatness and infinite goodness can satisfy. Surely, then, poverty is an unmitigated evil, as dire a curse as when sentence was passed in Eden.

Yet it is not so. God is merciful even in His wrath, and His punishments turn to the advantage of the elect. They are evil to

a certain extent, as being the consequences of sin, but through God's grace they may become the means of attaining to higher and spiritual good. Thus, suffering expiates our sins, sanctifies our souls, prepares us for heaven. Death, the extreme penalty, the horror of many, has become a repose, the triumph of the spirit over the world, the entrance to the supreme life. In like manner poverty, *i. e.*, privation, labor, weariness, has become the first beatitude in Our Lord's kingdom. They who are poor in spirit, as well as in the body, enjoy a nobler, easier, safer, happier state than that of the rich. In its temporal aspect, too, poverty is most useful and even necessary to the well-being of society; it is the basis and support of communities, the stimulus of strength, wealth and progress. We have already seen that it is most advantageous that there should be a rich class, on account of the duties which they alone can do; we have seen that it is a physical impossibility for all men to be rich. We shall consider now the dignity of the state of poverty, and its importance for the material interests of the world, for the advantage of the poor themselves, and for the glory of God.

III. 1. Our Lord changed and glorified poverty by choosing it for Himself. He, all-rich, all-powerful, all-wise, found this the state of life most suitable of all to His dignity, His holiness and His great work. In His birth, in His life, in His death, He was absolutely destitute, "and in labors from His youth" (Ps. lxxxvii, 16). His example may well help men to endure His lot, not only with resignation, but with gladness and even delight.

2. The poor are the special favorites of God. In the Old Testament He shows Himself as their Protector and the Avenger of their wrongs, He appoints them rights and privileges, He commits them most specially to the tenderness and care of His people. Our Lord, entering into the world, manifested Himself first of all to the poor by a special revelation through the angels. The chief mark of His divine mission, as given to the messengers of St. John, more important than curing the sick or raising the dead, was that "the poor have the Gospel preached to them" (Matt. xi, 5). They, no doubt, had their own special sins, hardness and coarseness, but on them Our Lord denounces no wo; their condition was their excuse; their temporal indigence was a claim on Our Lord's spiritual generosity. Even when the Apostles had the conversion of the world on their hands, they devoted special care to the poor; and

ever since a vast proportion of the work of the Church and of her religious orders has consisted in the relief of physical sufferings. How great a comfort to the desolate poor to feel that they are the object of so much love.

3. Poverty forces the soul upon God. The great danger of a life of pleasure and prosperity is that men learn to "trust in them"; they are wrapped up in them, limit their desires to these things, forget about heaven, and become alienated from God. But he who wills and suffers is little likely to think that this life is the whole of his destiny. His aspirations witness to the truths of religion and compel him to look toward the infinite and eternal.

4. It is much more evident to the poor man than to the rich that God supports and will provide for him. He takes no thought of the morrow, and each day brings sufficiency. He has experienced this, and though he knows not how he is to receive his daily bread, he is not solicitous about it. As he is free from anxiety, his poverty is divested of that which to the rich man seems its greatest terror; and, at the same time, he is saved from that want of confidence in God which is the source of most of our troubles of mind. In God he finds security and peace.

5. It is a great advantage to the bulk of mankind to find themselves in an easy school of virtue, and safe from the many dangers and grave responsibilities that fall to the rich. Their powers and their freedom may be limited by the necessities of life, but freedom of spirit from the thraldom of earthly possessions comes naturally to them, and has not to be gained through bitter struggles under heavy penalties for failure. They can more easily acquire the important virtue of contentment; according to the principle that the more men have, the more they want. Poverty teaches men industry, patience, detachment, lowliness, simplicity of character; it keeps the passions down, depriving them of their fuel and limiting the opportunities of sin; it helps to make satisfaction for sin and reduces the debt of punishment due for it; it is medicinal for the diseases of the soul, and it is meritorious of a high reward.

6. There is an incongruity between enjoying the finite and the infinite, having one's fill of good things here and goods things hereafter. Our Lord indicates it in the parable: "Son, remember that thou didst receive good things in thy lifetime, and likewise Lazarus evil things; but now he is comforted and thou art tormented" (Luke xvi, 25).

7. When the poor are able to take to heart and realize and console themselves with such reflections as these, their privations and limitations do not amount to so very much. They are without the leisure and repose, the elevation in position and culture, the mastery over their movements, the enjoyment of nature and art, which belong to the rich man. But what loss are all these things when men can rise to the possession and enjoyment of the infinite? Compared with the treasures men can possess in God all else is but a speck of dust. The poorest can have that repose which attends a good conscience and a pure life. He is more free from troubles than any monarch can ever hope to be. By resignation, the will of God becomes his will, and he has all that he desires. By intercourse with God in prayer and the practise of virtue, he can rise to an elevation of character such as no worldly education can give. Religion gives the highest culture, and in giving us God, it gives us perfect happiness. The possession of the most real advantages of life is then quite consistent with the state of poverty, and if any man is miserable and degraded in that state, it is entirely due to himself.

IV. 1. Not only in the kingdom of God, but also in the body politic, the poor occupy a very important and honorable position. They are very numerous; they form the great bulk of the community; they are the broad foundation on which the pyramid of civil society is reared. In legislation, for the greatest happiness of the greatest number, it is they who have principally to be consulted. If false principles should prevail, rendering their position unsatisfactory and rousing discontent in them, the whole social body is sick and disorganized. Their condition, material and mental, is perhaps the soundest test of the system under which they live.

2. The poor are important in the community as being the ultimate source of all wealth. Intelligence and capital are necessary to direct their efforts most profitably, but it is their muscles and sinews that draw forth the earth's raw wealth and give it proper form and its full value. The poor man, out of the unpaid portion of his labor, supports all the unproductive classes, some highly necessary to the community as doing useful work in return for their sustenance, although many others are absolutely idle, useless consumers. The community and each of these classes owes a debt of gratitude to the laborer for his benefits, and for the patience and contentment with which he renders them.

3. Poverty, that is, the pressure of want and hunger, and the need of labor to avoid them, is of absolute necessity for the development of the world and progress of the human race. It is the duty of man to "fill the earth and subdue it, and rule over . . . all living creatures that move upon the earth" (Gen. i, 28); also "to seek and search out wisely all things that are done under the sun" (Eccles. i, 13); to discover the secrets of nature, to wrest its treasures from the earth and mold them into new forms, to create science and manufactures. "This painful occupation which God hath given to the children of men to be exercised therein" (*Ibid.*), would never be accomplished if all men either had the means of leading an indolent life like the dwellers in tropical lands, or the leisure to devote to killing and ravaging, like the richer classes of earlier times.

4. The history of the rise and fall and struggles of nations shows us that invariably wealth saps the energies and corrupts the life of a nation. It leads to luxury, to immorality, and, at last, to destruction. Poverty, on the other hand, implies frugality, industry, self-denial, simplicity and strength; and on these virtues national greatness and success always follow. At least, with prosperity come wealth and luxury; but these, so far from being, as men think, the crown and reward of national virtue, are the commencement of enervation and decline. Thus the simple mountaineers of Greece repulsed the gorgeous hosts of Persia at Marathon and Salamis; they, too, grown corrupt, were crushed by the austere power of Rome; the Roman Empire in time was shattered by the rude barbarians of the North. The same law rules even the Church of God. "Never has she been in such peril as when she was rich." Never does she manifest such perfect virtue, such divine strength, such expansiveness, as when she is overwhelmed by poverty and persecution. Poverty is just as necessary for maintaining the condition of the world in general.

5. The existence of poverty is a further benefit to the rich, as providing them with the means of saving their souls. They may sanctify their wealth by sharing it with the poor; and they may enjoy with less danger the privileges of their position when they have sacrificed their luxuries to provide the poor with necessaries. The poor, with their many wants, afford an opportunity to the rich of practising the most brilliant virtues that can adorn men. Tenderness, sympathy, generosity, the remembrance of their brother-

hood with the lowly, the recognition of human equality and human rights, sacrifice of time and labor, substance and self, ingenuity in devising various remedies for various needs—these virtues, to be learned only by contact with the poor and suffering, not only chasten the individual character, but raise the whole standard of general life, besides covering a multitude of sins, and opening the way to heaven.

6. Toil and poverty, in some sense, are necessary for every person who would be saved. The law is for all. Even those who are exempt from the need of toiling for their support are bound to be producers—producers of some benefit to the community. Even those who are called to serve God in the state of wealth are bound to be poor in spirit *affectu* if not *effectu*. "They that rejoice as if they rejoiced not; and they that buy as if they possessed not; and they that use this world as if they used it not" (I Cor. vii, 30-31).

V. Thus the Christian view of poverty is, that it is a state of economical and spiritual benefit to men. The world rejects this view; it does not care about the spiritual aspect, and considers that economical poverty is an evil. This false view has produced endless practical evils; all speculations about poverty have, in consequence, been vain, all schemes frustrated, all remedies useless. Men hope to destroy poverty; they might as well attempt to dry up the ocean. They endeavor to alleviate its ills, but they can only touch its outskirts; and, after all is done, poverty remains deeper and more hopeless than ever—a greater problem and a greater danger. The Christian view brings about a very different result.

1. It causes respect for the poor, recognizing their state as a respectable one and not degraded; not exceptional but the normal state of the majority of men; as honorable as the state of wealth, though differing superficially from it. It causes love for the poor, regarding them as images of Jesus Christ, who takes to Himself the treatment we accord to His suffering members. So it leads many daily to resign their place in the world to become servants of the poor. Many of the noblest have left the ranks of the idle to become workers; they have enriched the world even materially by contributing their labors, and by abstaining from wasteful consumption.

2. Hence men have been shown the dignity of labor and the happiness that may be found in poverty. The rich are taught to respect poverty, the poor to be contented; two most necessary things, es-

pecially at the present day. A doctrine which contents the multitude is better for social progress than a doctrine that makes all men struggle feverishly for an object that only few can attain.

3. The Christian view is grounded, and helps to maintain the doctrine of the national equality of all mankind. Outside of religion men may declaim about equality, but they will never establish it. Theoretical and legal equality will never make men socially and practically equal, as long as wealth is held in supreme honor and poverty in contempt. The Catholic Church alone has the power to give the poor man his due place in human society, civil and religious; she makes him respected and contented, and gives him compensation for the hardness of his lot; this she does because to her alone has God given the blessedness of understanding concerning the needy and the poor.

# XXXII. THE SACRAMENTALS

BY THE RIGHT REV. ALEX. MAC DONALD, D.D.

*SYNOPSIS.—Introduction.—Every good gift from above. Grace the best of gifts. Twofold, sanctifying and actual. Ordinary means, the seven Sacraments. Sacramentals means in a subordinate way.*

*I. What the sacramentals are.—Sensible rites instituted by the Church to produce salutary effects; also objects blessed for same purpose. Sacramentals do not give sanctifying grace directly, but are a means of actual grace. Serve to free men from influence of evil spirits, strengthen against temptation, are sources of good inspirations. Actual grace not tied to sacramentals.*

*II. Various kinds of sacramentals. Grouped under six heads; (a) public prayer and prayer in consecrated places; (b) anointing with holy oil and sprinkling with holy water; (c) blessed meat and drink; (d) public confession of sins; (e) alms prescribed by the Church; (f) blessings of the Church. Power given to the Church by Our Lord to bless in His name. Himself exercised this power, as the word of God, from the beginning of the world, as the word incarnate "in the fulness of time." Blessings of the Church have a virtue "through Our Lord Jesus Christ." Church blesses objects (a) for her own use, (b) for the use of her children. Objects blessed withdrawn from influence of evil one, minister to temporal and spiritual needs of men. Higher blessing reserved for objects spiritually helpful. Church's empire over souls. Souls imprisoned in mortal body reached through gateways of sense.*

*III. Chief sacramentals. Various blessings and use of holy water. (a) Water symbol of cleanness. Blessed by Church from earliest times. Avails unto health of soul and body. Banishes evil spirits. Testimony of St. Teresa, expert in things of the soul. (b) Sign of Cross, though not sacramental. Very efficacious. Most likely of apostolic institution. Testimony of Tertullian. This sign the badge of Catholic Christian. Compendious confession of faith. Right mode of making it.*

*Conclusion.—Reverent use of sacramentals. Effect of, proportioned to faith and piety of those who use them. Old Testament example. Weapons of our spiritual warfare under Christ, our Captain and King.*

*Introduction.*—"Every good gift and perfect boon is from above coming down from the Father of lights." All that we are and have is God's gift, but the greatest and best of God's gifts is His grace. For grace is a gift above nature, freely granted by God with a view to put us in possession of the heritage of eternal life. It is twofold, habitual or sanctifying grace, which dwells in the soul as an abiding quality that grievous sin alone can uproot; and actual grace, this latter comprises every kind of supernatural help that God lends us in working out our salvation, light to the understand-

ing, strength to the will, and protection from the powers of darkness. The ordinary means of grace, both habitual and actual, are the seven Sacraments, sensible signs or rites suited to creatures of sense, instituted by Our Lord himself. But He has empowered His Church to institute other sensible signs or rites, which, in a subordinate way, are means of grace, more especially of actual grace, to those who use them rightly. These are known as the sacramentals.

*What the Sacramentals Are.*—All sensible rites instituted by the Church to produce salutary effects, as also all objects blessed by the Church for the same purpose, may be classed as sacramentals. They differ from the Sacraments, first, in that they are instituted by the Church, while the Sacraments are of divine institution. They differ from the Sacraments, in the second place, both as to the effect which they produce and as to the way in which they produce it. The Sacraments confer sanctifying grace directly, and by virtue of the act done; that is, by a virtue inherent in them from the institution of Christ and the agency of the Holy Spirit, who uses them for our sanctification. The sacramentals, on the other hand, never confer sanctifying grace directly and by virtue of the act done, but only indirectly and by virtue of the prayer and blessing of the Church cooperating with the faith and piety of the person who uses them. The Sacraments are channels through which sanctifying grace flows, as it were, into the soul; the sacramentals are but means by which the soul is aided and disposed to receive sanctifying grace, either through the Sacraments, or directly from God. Thus, what are called the ceremonies of Baptism dispose the person to be baptized to receive sanctifying grace through the Sacrament, and the sprinkling oneself with holy water, in a penitent spirit, disposes one to receive from God the forgiveness of venial sins.

But while the sacramentals never directly confer sanctifying grace, they may be, and ordinarily are, a direct means of actual grace. Actual grace is given with a view to enable those who are in sin to be freed from sin, or, again, to enable those who are in grace "by good works to make" their "calling and election sure." It is thus given to sinner and to saint alike, whereas no sinner as such; that is to say, no one who is in mortal sin, and does not repent, ever receives or ever can receive sanctifying grace. It is by actual grace that men are freed from the power of the devil, and certainly the exorcisms of the Church, which rank as sacramentals, are a direct

means of freeing men from his power. It is an actual grace to be strengthened against temptation, and there is no doubt that the sign of the Cross, made in the spirit of faith and piety, or the wearing of a scapular or other object blessed by the Church, gives strength against temptation. Once more, every good inspiration is an actual grace. Who does not know that the Crucifix and holy images are the sources of good inspirations without number? True, actual grace is not tied to the sacramentals. But they are a fruitful means of obtaining actual graces, and are such not merely by reason of the piety of those who use them, but primarily because of the institution, and prayer, and blessing of the Church.

*Various Kinds of Sacramentals.*—The various sacramentals may be conveniently grouped under six heads. First, there is prayer; not any and every prayer, but public prayer prescribed by the Church, to be said on stated occasions. An instance is the prayer of Rogation, the litany of the saints, as recited on Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday of Ascension Week. The special efficacy of prayer invested with such solemnity makes it rank as a sacramental. The same holds true of prayer made in a shrine, or in any place that is consecrated to the worship and service of God. Of such places it is said by Him who hears and answers our prayers, "My eyes and my heart shall be there always." Anointing with holy oil and sprinkling with holy water constitute another class of sacramentals. There is question here of such unctions as are used in Baptism, for instance; not of the anointing of the dying with the oil of the sick, or the unction with chrism in Confirmation, for in these latter cases the unction is something greater than a sacramental, being part of a Sacrament. Of holy water, its use and its efficacy, I shall have more to say later. A third sacramental is bread, as well as other kinds of food or drink, on which the Church invokes the blessing of God for the health of soul and body. A fourth is the public confession of sins embodied in the Confiteor, which the priest repeats in the Mass and Office, and the clerk recites on behalf of the people just before the distribution of Holy Communion. A fifth is alms prescribed by the Church to be given on certain occasions, as for the gaining of the jubilee indulgence. Lastly, the blessing of the Church is itself a sacramental, and the efficient cause of numerous sacramentals. The Church blesses through her lawfully ordained ministers, the Pope, the bishops, and the priests. The consecration of priests and bishops is a Sacrament, the Sacrament

of Holy Orders, which is shared by the various grades of the Church's ministers, and conferred in its fulness upon the bishops. So far as regards the Sacrament, a Pope receives the same consecration as any other bishop. But the Pope is not only Bishop of Rome, but Vicar of Christ and visible Head of the Church on earth. As such he receives an added consecration, which is a sacramental. In like manner Christian kings and emperors are consecrated, as also are abbots and monks.

The Church has received, through the Apostles, from Our Lord himself, the power to bless in His name. "As the Father hath sent me," He said to the Apostles, "I send you." We read in St. Matthew (x, 1) that He gave them power over unclean spirits, and to heal all manner of diseases. As the Word of God, by whom all things were made, and without whom was made nothing, He blessed the things which He made at the creation of the world. After the flood He blessed Noe and his sons. Thenceforward His blessing came through the patriarchs and prophets, and through the Aaronic priesthood, down to His own coming in the flesh to found His kingdom, and raise up unto Himself "a holy race and royal priesthood." While on earth He, with His own hands, bestowed blessings. He blessed the five loaves and two fishes to such purpose that they fed five thousand persons in the desert. He blessed the children that were brought to Him, and His very last act, before ascending into heaven, was to bless those that were gathered around Him on the Mount of Olives. It is by virtue of power received from Him that the Church blesses both persons and things, for all her blessings and all her invocations have their virtue "through Our Lord Jesus Christ," *per Dominum nostrum Jesum Christum.* The Church exercises this power especially in her consecration of persons and things, in her exorcisms, and in her blessing of objects for the healing both of spiritual and corporal ailments.

All objects blessed by the Church may be divided into two classes: (1) Such as minister to her own use; that is, such as are employed in the worship and service of God; (2) Such as minister to the spiritual and temporal needs of her children. Since the sin of our first parents, the earth itself, which has been given over to man as his abode, and the things that are for the use of man upon the earth lie under the primal curse. Hence it is said in Genesis that the earth shall bring forth briars and thorns, as if to intimate that it will hardly yield its best fruits even to the utmost toil of sinful man.

Moreover, Satan, the arch enemy of man, who, by lying and fraud, got man into his power, holds a tyrannical sway over men; save in so far as they have been made free through the grace of Jesus Christ; and he has invaded man's dwelling place, which is the earth, and has usurped a power over the sensible creatures that were made for the use of man. Hence, St. Paul speaks of the demons as "the world-rulers of this darkness," and Our Lord himself calls Satan "the prince of this world." To withdraw from the power of this prince the things that she uses in the worship of God, the Church blesses them, imparting to the principal ones, such as churches, altars, chalices, and so forth, a solemn consecration which makes them over permanently to the divine service. So, under the Mosaic dispensation, which had but "the shadow of the good things to come," the tabernacle and the vessels of the ministry were purified by the sprinkling of blood.

The Church, as I have said, also blesses, but by a less solemn form of blessing, the things that serve the spiritual and temporal needs of man. Of the latter class are certain domestic animals, and the seeds that are put in the ground. The blessing is given for a twofold purpose, to enhance the fruitfulness of the creatures of God and to preserve them from the malign influence of evil spirits. "Every creature of God is good," says the Apostle, and he adds that "it is sanctified by the word of God and prayer," thereby implying that the blessing which comes through the word of God and prayer makes the creature more serviceable to man, and sets it apart, as it were, for his especial benefit. That which is "sanctified" is thereby withdrawn from evil influence. In such blessings as these, then, there is no taint of superstition, but rather the recognition, on the one hand, of God's power and goodness, and on the other of the influence for evil which the devil is suffered to exercise, because of the sins of men, over the very creatures that were made for man's use and benefit.

But the Church reserves a higher blessing for the things that serve the spiritual needs of men. Her one great mission on earth is to save souls. Manifold as are the benefits she bestows in the temporal order, they are meant ultimately to subserve the one supreme purpose of her being and operation in the world. "She regards," says Cardinal Newman, "this world and all that is in it as a mere shadow, as dust and ashes, compared with the value of one single soul. . . . She would rather save the soul of one

single wild bandit of Calabria, or whining beggar of Palermo, than draw a hundred lines of railroad through the length and breadth of Italy, or carry out a sanitary reform, in its fullest details, in every city of Sicily, except so far as these great national works tended to some spiritual good beyond them." Her empire is over souls, and her mission to heal and save them. But the soul, be it of beggar, be it of king, is here and now imprisoned in a mortal body. To reach it, to heal it, she must go through the gateways of sense, and apply her heavenly remedies under some sensible form. Hence, the use that the Church makes of sensible objects, sensible reminders of things spiritual, sensible aids to devotion almost without number, in carrying on the heavenly work intrusted to her.

Scapulars, beads, palms, ashes, candles, crucifixes, medals, images, these, and such as these, are the weapons of her warfare, blessed and given into the hands of her children to fight therewith the foes of their salvation and win a fadeless crown. Weak weapons these and ineffective in the eyes of the worldly wise. But "Hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world"? For "the foolish things of the world hath God chosen that he may confound the wise; and the weak things of the world hath he chosen that he may confound the strong; and the base things of the world, and the things that are contemptible, yea, the things that are not, that he may bring to naught the things that are."

One of the chief sacramentals is holy water.

By reason of its purity water is a fitting symbol of that cleanness of heart without which no one shall see God. "I will pour out on you clean water," says God by the prophet Ezechiel, "and you shall be cleansed." The Jewish priests washed their hands and feet before offering sacrifice, and ritual ablutions were common among the Jews. When the practice of blessing water began in the Christian Church we do not know for certain. It is a tradition of the Roman Church, that Pope St. Alexander the First, in the early part of the second century, prescribed the blessing of water mixed with salt, and a formula for the blessing is to be found in the so-called Apostolical Constitutions, which date, perhaps, from the third century. In any case, the practise is ancient. Among the most beautiful prayers of the Ritual are those used in the blessing of holy water. The Church prays in the name of the most Holy Trinity that it may avail unto health of soul and body, and especially that it may serve effectually to drive away all evil and unclean spirits.

As a matter of fact, no sacramental has such efficacy as this in banishing the evil one. In the Life of St. Teresa, written by herself, the saint assures us that she proved this to be true, over and over again. "I have often found by experience," she writes, "that there is nothing from which the devil flies more quickly than from holy water; they fly also from the sign of the Cross, but quickly return again. Certainly the power of holy water must be great; for my part my soul feels a particular comfort in the use of it; . . . and it is a subject of great delight to me that those words which the Church uses when she blesses the water should be so powerful in making so great a difference between blessed and unblessed water." People set great store by expert testimony, and if ever there was an expert in the things of the spiritual life she who witnesses in these words to the efficacy of holy water was one.

First in use, perhaps, of all the sacramentals was the sign of the Cross.* Our Lord himself speaks of "the sign of the Son of Man," which we understand to be the Cross, and St. Paul cries out, "God forbid that I should glory save in the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ." There can be no reasonable doubt that the custom of making the sign of the Cross comes down from the days of the Apostles. "At every forward step or movement," says Tertullian, "at every going in and out, when we put on our clothes and shoes, when we bathe, when we sit at table, when we light the lamps, on going to bed, on sitting down, in all the ordinary actions of daily life, we mark our foreheads with the sign of the Cross" (De Corona, N. 3). And he pleads immemorial tradition as warrant for the observance. "For these and other such practises," he adds, "if you insist upon having positive Scripture injunction, you will find none. Tradition will be held forth to you as the source of them, custom as their strengthener, faith as their observer." The sign of the Cross is and always has been the badge of the Catholic Christian. It marks him off as a follower of the Crucified, a soldier of Christ. It is a compendious confession of faith in the principal mysteries of our religion. We should begin and end our day with this saving sign. The first thing that a Catholic mother should teach her child, as soon as it is able to speak, is to make the sign of the Cross, and to make it properly. This is done by placing the left hand on the breast, and, with the out-

*Editor's Note: Some authorities hold that the sign of the Cross is not strictly a sacramental, because not instituted by the Church.

stretched fingers of the right touching the forehead, saying meanwhile, "In the name of the Father," the breast, saying, "and of the Son," the left and right shoulders, saying, "and of the Holy Ghost." The way so many Catholics travesty rather than make this sacred sign would indicate that their early training was neglected.

*Conclusion.*—Let us reverence and make devout use of the sacramentals of Holy Church. And let us always bear in mind that the effect they produce is proportionated to the faith and piety of those who use them. In vain did the Israelites of old bring the Ark of the Covenant on the field of battle when they had incurred the anger of God by their sins. Equally ineffective will these weapons of our spiritual warfare prove in our hands if we are not loyal, in heart and conscience, to our Captain and King. He is our strength, He it is who gives us victory over our enemies and rewards our loyal service, according as it is written, "Be thou faithful even unto death, and I will give thee the crown of life."

# XXXIII. THE BLESSINGS OF PERSONS

BY THE REV. J. W. SULLIVAN

"The Lord bless thee, and keep thee; the Lord show his face to thee, and have mercy on thee; the Lord turn his countenance to thee, and give thee peace."—Num. vi, 24-26.

*SYNOPSIS.—I. Besides the Sacraments, which are the principal sources of grace, there are other means of sanctification found in the sacramentals—among these are the blessings of persons.*

*II. They are acts of religion inasmuch as they acknowledge our entire dependence upon God. To bless means to wish one good, to beg God to send His gifts upon one.*

*III. Old Testament. God blessed Adam and Eve. Custom of the Patriarchs. Form of blessing ordered by God. Promise of fulfilment attached.*

*New Law. Priests succeeded to the powers of the Apostles. Church, in ordination ceremony, gives this power to her priests. Christ blessed the children and the Apostles, etc.*

*IV. Various blessings. At the conclusion of Mass, at holy Communion, St. Blaise, nuptial benediction, churching, last blessing, blessing of the remains of the departed.*

*V. Read and meditate upon these blessings. Use of them is a sign of faith and devotion. Neglect is culpable indifference. St. Paul's words. Effect depends upon the worthiness of the recipient. Ark of the Covenant—sick woman in the Gospel.*

As of old it pleased almighty God to cheer the barrenness of the desert with the refreshing streams miraculously issuing from the rock at the command of His servant Moses, so it has pleased that same divine wisdom to refresh the wilderness of our pilgrimage with seven fountains of living waters poured from the rock of His Church at the command of His Son, our Lord Jesus Christ. The prophet looking down the ages exclaimed, "You shall draw waters with joy out of the fountains of the Saviour," fountains which he proclaimed to be nourishing as milk and generous as wine. Christ established these great channels of grace, the seven Sacraments, in wisdom, to teach us the manifold operations of grace, and in bounty, to accommodate His blessings to our exigencies. But besides these most important, essential sources of grace, are there no other means of obtaining from God temporal benefits and spiritual health? No ways, which divine Providence has placed at the disposal of His Church to free His children from tempta-

tion, help them in body, strengthen them in faith and cleanse them from the soil of venial sin? We find these ways and means in the sacramentals, those objects which the Church, through her ministers, blesses or consecrates, praying in the name of Jesus Christ that God will render these objects efficacious in protecting against the assaults of the evil one, in succoring in time of sickness, and such like blessings. True, they are not, as the Sacraments, necessary for salvation; true, they have not been established by Christ; but, like the Sacraments, they have the outward sign and the form of words which possess a supernatural power and represent an invisible grace.

To-day let us consider the sacramentals, namely, blessings or benedictions, which are customarily conferred on persons. How consoling to be blessed in God's name by one of His ministers! What a splendid act of religion is therein contained—we thereby acknowledge that from Him alone come all benefits, that He is all goodness, willing to help us, that He is all powerful and able to help us, that all our trust and all our confidence repose in Him. Is it not a source of joy to experience the power of the Church's prayers in our behalf in the blessings she imparts to us? To bless is not only to wish, but also to beg good things for another. It is an old custom sanctioned by the use of ages. Did not God bless Adam and Eve (Gen. i, 28)? Were not the hands of Noe raised in blessing over his two sons (Gen. ix, 26)? How gracious did Isaac send his son into Syria, "blessed" with the "blessings of Abraham" (Gen. xxviii, 4). And when the old patriarch felt his end approaching he summoned his son to bless him, saying, "God give thee of the dew of heaven, and of the fatness of the earth, abundance of corn and wine" (Gen. xxvii, 28). His action illustrates the custom of the patriarchs who were wont to bless their children when they realized that the evening of life was at hand. "The Lord spoke to Moses, saying: Say to Aaron and his sons: Thus shall you bless the children of Israel, and you shall say to them: The Lord bless thee, and keep thee; the Lord show his face to thee, and have mercy on thee; the Lord turn his countenance to thee, and give thee peace."

Here we see the different forms which God ordered the priests of the old law to use in blessing the people. And with the command of the Almighty came the assurance that to this prescribed invocation of the name of God, would be added the fulfilment of

the desire expressed: "They shall invoke my name upon the children of Israel and I will bless them." "And the priests and the Levites rose up, and blessed the people; and their voice was heard; and their prayer came to the holy dwelling place of heaven" (II Paral. xxx, 27).

Under the new law the pastors have this duty for part of their office. They are the successors of the Apostles, and St. Matthew (x, 1) tells us that, "having called his twelve disciples together, he gave them power over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal all manner of diseases, and all manner of infirmities." "Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse the lepers, cast out devils; freely have you received, freely give" (*Ibid.* x, 8). Sensible of this power, the Church puts her pastors in mind of it, as well as of the other parts of their duty, when they are receiving the order of priesthood; for the ordaining bishop then says to them: "It is the duty of a priest to offer sacrifice, to bless, to preach, to baptize," etc. And when the hands are consecrated with holy unction, the bishop offers the prayer, "Vouchsafe, O Lord, to consecrate and sanctify these hands by this unction and our benediction, that whatever they shall bless may be blessed, and whatever they consecrate may be consecrated, in the name of Our Lord Jesus Christ." And he who consecrates the bishop himself, prays over him, saying, "Whatsoever thou shalt bless, may it be blessed, and whatsoever thou shalt sanctify, may it be sanctified; and may the laying on of thy consecrated hand be of service to all for salvation." As the Master blessed the little children who were brought unto Him (Matt. x, 16), as He gave His blessing to His Apostles before His ascension, so does His spouse, the Church, command her priests to bless her children, praying in her name that God would vouchsafe to make all things conform to their temporal and eternal welfare. And if the good Master himself (Mark x, 16), before His ascension, invoked God's benediction upon His disciples, that new strength might be theirs in the battles which they were to wage alone after His departure, shall we neglect the blessings which God's Church invokes in His name upon us? Do we not know that the petitions of the Church, united as they are to the prayer of Our Lord and to the supplications of the saints, are most powerful, is it not true that prayer offered in the Church, and by the Church, is more efficacious than prayer offered individually and elsewhere?

Abundant indeed should be the grace received by those who assist at holy Mass with devotion and attention, but forget not the blessing added at the end that God's assistance may go forth with us into our daily trials and temptations. We should make it a point not only to remain for this blessing, as duty requires, but to raise our hearts to God the moment it is given, and beg Him to make it effective in our life. Much time is given to the preparation for Holy Communion, yet do we think when kneeling at the railing of the blessing pronounced by the priest that almighty God may have mercy upon us, and forgive us our sins and bring us unto life everlasting; that He may grant us pardon, absolution and remission of our sins? or do we consider the invocation he makes just as he administers the Holy Communion: "The body of our Lord Jesus Christ preserve thy soul unto life everlasting. Amen?" Could aught be more prayerful? If thoughts like these took deep hold of our minds we would never turn from beholding the face of our Master, so gentle and so divine, radiant with the brightness of God, and soft with the dewy pity of a brother and a priest. How many of you have joined the numbers of the pious and devout people who come on the third day of February to beg God's blessing through the intercession of that holy bishop and martyr, St. Blaise? If in times of sickness and temptation we should have recourse to the asistance offered by the sacramentals, is it not part of wisdom to prevent bodily illness or to forestall the struggles with sin by anticipating their attacks? If the blessing of the high priest brought to Anna of old the inestimable gift of an illustrious son in the prophet Samuel, will God refuse to listen to his more powerful priest of the new law when holding the blessed candles over the throat of each of us he prays that "through the intercession of St. Blaise, bishop and martyr, may God deliver thee from sickness of the throat and from every other evil in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost. Amen"? The Apostles anointed with oil many that were sick, and healed them (Mark vi, 13), and the Church has by divine right inherited the powers of the Apostles and administers them in her wisdom.

Yet her wise suggestions are not always given the heed which is their due. Time and thought are given by the young couple to the outward, external preparation for their marriage. A ceremony at home, or an evening affair at the church, with nothing more than the cold cheerless form of matrimony, is preferred to a mar-

riage at holy Mass with its warmth of devotion and its splendor of ritual. For the sake of some imagined or trifling inconvenience, because of some weak or personal objection, the superb nuptial blessing is sacrificed. That beautiful prayer to the Almighty that He may shower His richest gifts upon the couple is too often forgotten. In the hustle and bustle of preparation no invitation is given to Him who blessed with His gracious presence the nuptials of Cana. The wedding of Tobias and Sara was blessed of God, and their marriage proved exceedingly happy and fruitful. Let the young people have God's blessing that "the yoke may be one of love and peace," that the bride may be a follower of holy matrons, pleasing to her husband like Rachel, wise like Rebecca, long-lived and faithful like Sara. Let them have the spouse of Christ pray her Master that the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob be with them and fulfil His blessing upon them; that they may see their children's children unto the third and fourth generation; and afterward have everlasting life, without end, by the help of Our Lord Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns God, world without end. Amen.

One of the principal blessings of the Church, eagerly sought by Catholic mothers, is that which is given after childbirth, called churching. The pure and spotless mother of God humbly complied with the law of Leviticus and went through the prescribed rite of purification, though she needed it not, before entering the sanctuary. What wonder that her example induced the custom among Christian mothers of abstaining from entering the Church for some time after childbirth, of then asking the blessing of the priest at the church door, and of making their first visit one of thanksgiving to God for their safe delivery! Surely there can be no devoted mother who will fail to follow so venerable a practise of the Church, and one illustrated by so high an exemplar as Mary. There is no obligation to receive this blessing, there is no sin committed if it be neglected. And yet to pass it over shows a want of devotion and of deep faith, for there is much to be thankful for, special reason why the mother should join the Church in the psalm of triumph with its antiphon of promise, for she has received a blessing from the Lord and mercy from God her Saviour. The crown of motherhood is hers by the grace of God. On her depends the early education of him who rules the world. For almost every great soul that has led forward or uplifted the race has been furnished for each

noble deed, and inspired with each patriotic and holy aspiration, by the fortitude of a Christian mother. The mother's lips are the first to teach the child the lessons that are to guide him in life. These are the lessons that are most deeply impressed on his mind, and are the most influential in their bearing on his future conduct. Come ye mothers and beg with the Church that the peace of God almighty, Father, Son and Holy Spirit may descend upon you and remain with you always! Come and beg the blessing that you may be found worthy to attain, together with your offspring, unto the joys of everlasting happiness!

How tenderly solicitous the Church is for our welfare. From cradle to grave, with gentle, loving kindness she follows us. Now she is beseeching God's blessing on the new-born infant, again asking that we be delivered from temptation of soul and illness of body, then praying for an abundance of God's gifts upon the newly married couple, and begging help and peace out of God's holy place, and defense out of Sion for the joyful and thankful mother after childbirth, when finally, the evening of life is drawing near, when interest in things human is on the wane, when mortal hands have done all that mortal love can suggest, when we are about to stand before our Creator and our Judge, there is Mother Church with her last blessing, her final absolution to console and to strengthen us. After we have received the Sacrament of Penance and the holy Viaticum, though we may have prepared for them with unusual diligence, we feel, we must feel, that there is much that we have overlooked. Those various venial sins, even the more serious ones, which will escape our vigilance when in the full of health and vigor, will surely elude us amid the sufferings and distractions that are ours in the last moments of life. Add to this the consciousness of our unfitness to meet God, in whose sight the heavens are not pure, the knowledge that there is a temporal punishment due to our sins though they be forgiven in the Sacrament of Penance; and you can understand that a realizing sense of these facts is not cheering nor helpful. Then it is that we stand in need of the last blessing and the plenary indulgence which the Church imparts at the hour of death, to secure for us peace of soul and calm of mind, to bring us that spiritual courage that will help us to meet death without fear and without regret. It behooves us to see to it that the sick who are in danger receive this last benediction, and that they receive it (if possible) while they are still

conscious. When our own course is run and our fight is fought, it should be our earnest desire to receive this general absolution before we depart, to have the spouse of Christ, through her priests, pray "that Our Lord Jesus Christ may receive our confession and restore unto us that first robe which we received in Baptism, that we may be granted the plenary indulgence and remission of all our sins," and, too, "that God may remit unto us the pains of the present and the future life, open to us the gates of paradise, and bring us to everlasting joys."

And after death the Church is loath to let us go without a parting benediction. To teach us to reverence this temple of the Holy Spirit, and to impress the more deeply upon us the fact that our bodies will one day rise in glory to be united with the soul, she blesses it before it is laid in the ground. Then it is she prays the angels to lead us into paradise and the martyrs to bring us into the holy city, Jerusalem. Then it is that the soulful cry goes up for our loved ones who have departed: "eternal rest grant unto them, O Lord, and let perpetual light shine upon them."

Take your prayer-book, read these blessings carefully, meditate upon them and see how abundant are the favors which it is the good pleasure of God to communicate to you through them. The use, and the frequent use, of these blessings of the Church is an outward sign of the faith that is in us, it is an open testimony of our devotion to and of our love for the means of grace within the Church. The neglect of them is culpable indifference on our part to the petitions of the Church, supported as they are by the prayers of Our Lord and fortified by the supplications of the saints; and she may admonish us in the words of St. Paul: "He that despises these things, despises not man, but God who also hath given his holy spirit in us" (Acts xv, 28). It is, moreover, our duty to use them, for we are bound to increase sanctifying grace within us that we may grow more and more in God's favor, and these benedictions can not but aid in the purification of our souls and assist in rendering us more acceptable in the sight of God. The drowning man clutches at a straw in his struggle for life, and are we, who should be no less in earnest about our salvation, to neglect these most efficient aids toward securing it?

While it is well to receive the blessings, we must not forget that their effect depends upon the worthiness and the pious dispositions of the individual who receives them. The Ark of the Covenant

had brought joy and victory to Israel's camp, but what avail was it on the field of battle when her sins had brought God's wrath upon her? No more will His blessings abide with us if our hearts are set on other things and our wills are opposed to Him. The first condition, then, of their effectiveness is that we be free from grave sin and in the friendship of God. Our Lord, St. Matthew tells us, came into His own country, and taught there in the synagogues, so that the people wondered and said: "How came this man by this wisdom and miracles?" And they were scandalized in His regard. Then the evangelist informs us of their lack of faith: "He wrought not many miracles there, because of their unbelief" (Matt. xiii, 54-58). How differently did the sick woman fare. "If I shall touch but His garment I shall be made whole." She touched the garment, the virtue went out from it and "the fountain of her blood was dried up." He said unto her: "Daughter, thy faith hath made thee whole; go in peace" (Mark v, 28-34).

Use these sacramentals unto your own sanctification, receive them in spirit of reverence and devotion, with faith and confidence as St. James says: "Let him ask in faith, nothing wavering" (James i, 6). And "blessed be God the Father of Our Lord Jesus Christ who hath blessed us with spiritual blessings in heavenly places, in Christ" (Eph. i, 3).

# XXXIV. THE CROSS: THE SIGN OF THE CROSS; THE CRUCIFIX

BY THE REV. JAMES J. FOX, D.D.

"God forbid that I should glory save in the Cross of Our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified to me, and I to the world."—Gal. vi, 14

*SYNOPSIS.—I. The kingdom of Jesus Christ was, during His life, hidden from men. It was by His death on the Cross that He took possession of it. Hence the Cross is the standard of His kingdom, the emblem of His triumph. It signifies His triumph over the justice of God; over sin; over death; over His enemies. The Cross is the abridgement of Christ's law; it expresses the malice of sin; the necessity of self-denial and renunciation of the flesh and its desires; it is the standard by which we are to live and by which we shall be judged. From the beginning of Christianity the Cross was acknowledged by friend and enemy to be the distinctive emblem of Christianity.*

*II. From the earliest times the first Christians signed themselves with the sign of the Cross—as a profession of their faith—and as an invocation to God for protection. The Church inculcates its constant use. It is an abridged profession of faith in the chief mysteries of our religion. Danger of contracting habits of carelessness and inattention from its frequent employment.*

*III. The Crucifix. The image of our crucified Lord; efficacy of images to cherish piety; especially of the Crucifix. It is the most eloquent of sermons. Conclusion.*

When the prophets spoke of Our Lord Jesus Christ they spoke of a King to come, of whose kingdom there should be no end. "He shall reign over the house of David, and of his kingdom there shall be no end." The Jews expected a royal Messias to exalt their temporal kingdom over all the nations of the earth. Yet, when our divine Saviour did appear on earth the circumstances of His birth offered no suggestion of royalty. For a moment, with the coming of the shepherds and the holy men from the East, it seemed as if the Saviour's claims were to be made known to the world. But that moment passed to be followed by complete obscurity. Again, at His baptism, as a voice proclaimed from heaven, "This is my beloved son," it looked as if the kingdom was about to be proclaimed. But again the veil fell, so that during His missionary years men said of Christ: "Is not this the son of the carpenter?" and only the lowliest of men were His constant companions.

At last, however, the day arrived on which the Son of God was to grasp His standard and advance to take possession of the king-

dom, and cause His royalty to be proclaimed before earth and heaven. It was in the palace of the Roman rulers, the supreme masters of the world, that He first claimed His rights. "Art thou then a king?" said the Roman power. "A king I am, indeed," replied Jesus, "but my kingdom is not of this world." Shortly after, Pilate, unknown to himself, became the instrument of eternal truth, and wrote the everlasting title: "Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews." The standard of that kingdom was the Cross. Soon after Jesus entered upon his triumphal march. Bearing His Cross He went forth to the place which is called Calvary. This march culminated in, if we may use a familiar word, the inauguration of Jesus Christ into His Kingdom, a kingdom embracing heaven and earth. The Cross was at once His standard and His throne. The coronation was complete when the Redeemer, bowing the thorn-crowned head, exclaimed: "It is finished—Father into thy hands I commend my spirit." The instrument of His death, soaked with His sacred Blood, the key by which He unlocked the heavens that were closed against us, indissolubly associated with the memory of His death, alone capable of signifying the depths of the tortures, physical and mental, which He passed through, the Cross has ever been the unique, universally acknowledged symbol of Jesus Christ and of His religion. It embodies forth as no other conceivable emblem could, the nature of His mission on earth, His triumph over the enemy whom He came to conquer, the character of His doctrine, and the opposition between that teaching and the way of the world.

The cross, in the Roman world, was made of two coarse, rough pieces of wood, put together in the simplest fashion, to form a gibbet that should serve its purpose the more fully in proportion as it should aggravate the suffering and contribute to the degradation of the wretched man condemned to die on it. With us half of the punishment involved in death by hanging is the dreadful shame associated with death upon the gallows. But the shame of the gallows is slight compared to the ignominy attached in ancient days to crucifixion. The cross expressed the fullest possible measure of contempt, loathing, scorn; it was the greatest indignity that could be cast upon the vilest of human beings. No free citizen, however wicked, could lawfully be crucified. It was the death reserved for the despised slave and the hated outlaw, who were regarded not as men, but as the vilest of beasts. Raised high toward heaven, its

arms stretching out toward both ends of the earth, the Cross of Jesus Christ proclaims to men that God's love has conquered the malice and wickedness of sinners; that mercy has overcome justice; for it announces that, not withstanding our sins, God hath so loved the world that, for our sakes, He sent on earth His divine Son to humble Himself for us unto death, even unto the death of the Cross. The Cross extends its arms to welcome all, to save all, to proclaim that all are welcomed as the ransomed children of the spiritual kingdom over which reigns the immortal King of ages, Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews.

By the Cross Jesus triumphed over sin. Sin in its first appearance on earth was an act of disobedience prompted by human pride and wilfulness; and the malice of every sin that ever had been committed consists likewise in its being an act of disobedience and rebellion against the sovereign adorable will of the Almighty. By the Cross the curse of original sin was taken away; Jesus redeemed us by "blotting out the handwriting of the decree that was against us, and was contrary to us, and he hath taken the same out of the way, fastening it to the Cross" (Col. ii, 14). The disobedience of our first parents, the disobedience lurking in every sinful act of any human will, has been expiated by the Cross of Christ. For Jesus who, "being in the form of God, and thought it not robbery to be equal with God, humbled himself becoming obedient unto death, even unto the death of the Cross" (Phil. ii, 8).

The Cross signifies the triumph of Jesus over death. His enemies intended that the crucifixion should make an end of Jesus and of His influence over His followers and men in general. Instead of such result the death of Jesus was the opening of His reign over that kingdom of His which extended like a flame past the confines of Judea, till it brought the civilized world to acknowledge His divinity; and which, for nearly two thousand years, has embraced innumerable millions who worshiped the crucified Saviour as the Son of God. Christ triumphed over temporal death not for Himself alone, but for us all. Man, if he is reasonably prudent, naturally fears death, not for its physical terror so much as for the dreadful uncertainty in which he is, concerning the things beyond the grave. This dread is increased by our consciousness of sin combined with the conviction which no human being can stifle in his bosom, that death shall conduct us into the presence of a Judge before whom we must give an account of our days and works. But the recollection

of the death of Jesus is powerful to dispel this terror. From the Cross pours forth the light that illumines the dark passage, and fills our souls with hope. The Cross declares to those who follow it that death is the end of danger, the end of trial, the entrance to the heavenly kingdom which the Saviour entered upon Himself and opened for us by the death of the Cross. "And when this mortal hath put on immortality then shall come to pass the saying that is written: "Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? Thanks be to God who hath given us the victory, through Our Lord Jesus Christ" (I Cor. xv).

Besides being the standard of this triumph, the Cross is the abridgment of Christ's doctrine and law. If the Cross proclaims the mercy of God it proclaims, too, His hatred for sin. For the Cross announces to us the unfathomable depths of pain and disgrace, through which the Almighty decreed that His beloved Son should pass, before the divine Justice would blot out the decree that was recorded against us. And, as Christ asks, if these things be done in the green wood, what shall be done in the dry? If God has thought that the death of the Cross was not too terrible a penalty to exact from His own beloved Son in expiation of the sins of men, what will be the rigor of justice for those sinners who, unrepentant and unforgiven, fall into the hands of the living God?

The Cross is the summary of Christ's law. He himself uses it in that sense. He declares to us that if we would live according to His commandments, if we would be followers of Him and tread after Him the path that leads to heaven, then the Cross it is that marks the way. Calling the multitude together with His disciples, He said to them: "If any man will follow me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it, and whosoever shall lose his life for my sake and the gospel, shall save it" (Mark viii, 34, 35). What are the things that make shipwreck of man's salvation? Pride, the love of self-indulgence, of pleasure, of riches. Against pride the Cross sets the obedience of Jesus Christ, and the humility which was obedient even to the death of the Cross. In opposition to the love of riches, of pleasure, of the flesh, the Cross tells us of the God-man, stripped of all earthly things, even to His last poor garments; His flesh torn, bruised, pierced with thorns and nails and spear, till from its veins He has poured forth the last drop of His sacred

Blood. And as the Cross is the example that we are called upon to follow, it will be the test by which our fidelity to Jesus shall be judged. This sign shall be in the heavens, says the Gospel, when the Lord shall come to judge the nations—a sign for the comfort of those who have been faithful to it, of confusion to the illdoer and the wicked who, in the words of the Apostle, have been haters of the Cross of Christ.

When, after the Resurrection, the Apostles went forth to preach the Gospel to the world, the Cross became immediately their distinctive emblem, and the sign which told in a word the truth that the religion which they offered was like no other religion that the pagan world had ever heard of. It was not a religion depending on learning or political power. It promised not glory, but shame; not the favor of men, but persecution; not success, but defeat, in the race for the prizes dear to the world. "We preach Christ crucified," they declared, "unto the Jews, indeed, a stumbling block and unto the Gentiles foolishness" (I Cor. i, 23). "God forbid," was their motto, "that I should glory save in the Cross of Christ." Against the wickedness and insolence of men they set the contradiction of the Cross. In a very brief time in the mind of Gentile and Jew, as well as Christian, the Cross became another word for the religion of the Crucified. The great and learned of the world considered that they had said all that was to be said, of the stupidity, baseness and servility of the Christians, when they called them followers of the Cross. When pagans who hated the new religion would manifest their hostility they gave expression to their feelings by reviling the Cross. As the centuries wore on Christianity grew strong, spread from land to land, till it finally triumphed throughout the Roman world. Then the sign of this victory was the setting up of the Cross in honor throughout the imperial city. Henceforward throughout the history of the world, civilized and savage, whether placed on the top of some magnificent cathedral, or newly planted on a mound of sand along the coast of some savage island, by some devoted missionary, the Cross means Christianity; and those who are opposed to the religion of Jesus Christ acknowledge that their war cry is: Down with the Cross. In the office of Good Friday the Church exhibits the Cross to special veneration, and employs a prayer which expresses the devotion which she teaches us to exhibit to the Cross at all times. Let us try to remember it, or if we do not retain the words, let us cherish the spirit which animates it

toward the instrument of our salvation: *We adore thy Cross, O Lord, and we praise and glorify thy holy resurrection, for by the wood of the Cross the whole world is filled with joy.*

II. The sign of the Cross. From the days of the Apostles the first Christians were accustomed to mark the sign of the Cross regularly upon themselves, in order to express their faith, or to recognize one another, as well as to recall to their memory the death of the Redeemer. One of the earliest Christian writers says: "At every step and movement, whenever we come in or go out, when we dress ourselves or purpose to go abroad, at the bath, at table or lying down, or sitting down; whatever we be doing, we make the sign of the Cross upon our heads" (Tertull. de Coron. milit. c. ii). And as it was in the first days of Christianity, so, you know, it is throughout the Catholic Church to-day. The first thing which the pious mother teaches her baby is to make the sign of the Cross: In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen. This sign is a short expression of the principal mysteries of our holy faith. *In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.* These words set forth the doctrine of the Trinity—three persons distinct, Father, Son and Holy Ghost. Yet there is but one God; hence, merely, not in the names, but in the name. We commemorate, too, the mystery of the Incarnation. The Son, the second person of the Trinity, became man, for did He not die on the Cross, which we call to mind as we pronounce the words? The mystery of the Redemption, too, is recalled, for it was upon that bloody altar, whose outline we trace upon ourselves, that the incarnate God, the Son of the eternal Father, and of the Immaculate Virgin Mary, was offered up in expiation of our sins, and the sins of the human race. Employing it as the universal sign which marks us out as a follower of Christ, we commemorate, too, the fact that we are members of the Church of Jesus Christ, who, as St. Paul says, delivered himself up for it "that he might present it to himself as not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish" (Eph. v, 27). Above all, the sign of the Cross which we make on our forehead reminds us that in Baptism we have had stamped indelibly on our souls the mark of a follower of Jesus Christ; that this sign has been confirmed in us by the chrism of the Sacrament of Confirmation; that by these two Sacraments we have been enrolled in the great army of Christ under the standard of the Cross,

to fight against the world, the flesh and the devil; that, to be faithful followers of Christ, there is no other way under heaven than the way of the Cross. "If any man will be my disciple let him take up his Cross and follow me."

Rich in meaning, holy in its association, eloquent above all other signs and above all words, to express the greatest sanctities of our holy religion, no wonder that we find the Church has multiplied beyond computation its employment in all her rites and services. The priest makes the sign of the Cross continually during the holy sacrifice, in the administration of the Sacraments, and all the other rites and ceremonies. By the sign of the Cross we begin our vocal prayers and every other religious exercise.

Do we reverence it as we ought? Is it not a fact that our long familiarity with it, the frequency with which we employ it, begets a habit of careless routine? We go through the gesture with our hand, while neither head nor heart takes any share in the action. Even the external action is not properly performed. How frequently may we observe Catholics, when it is time to bless themselves, instead of devoutly touching successively forehead, breast and shoulders while simultaneously pronouncing the appropriate words, hurriedly making some nondescript movement with their hand through the air in front of them, and evidently without any serious attention to the meaning of the act they perform? Who would venture to say that the person who thus makes the sign of the Cross, recalls, even in the vaguest manner, the religious truths which, as we have seen, are associated with the sacred symbol? Does he recall the death of Jesus Christ, does he raise his head to God in thanksgiving for the grace of having been called, through no merit of his, to be a member of the Church of Jesus Christ? Does he think at all of the sin and suffering, of the grace and redemption, of the hope and fear, associated with the Cross of Christ? Scarcely; and, therefore, he can not expect to partake, as he might and should, in the blessings attached to making use of this holy sign. The sign of the Cross, properly made, with due attention and devotion, is one of the most powerful prayers to God; it is one of the most efficacious means to inspire our minds with good and salutary thoughts, and our hearts with feelings of love for our Redeemer, whose death we thereby commemorate; of sorrow for our sins which caused that death; and of trust in God's mercy which the Cross has obtained for us. How, my brethren, do you make the sign of the Cross? You all make it

frequently, I am sure, for otherwise you might scarcely be considered Catholics at all. But, perhaps, it is necessary for you to correct the carelessness which custom has given rise to. Examine yourselves on this point, and resolve that, in future, you shall, as you cross yourselves, recollect the significance of the action which you perform. Teach your children by word, but especially by example, frequently to make upon themselves, with reverent devotion, the mark of salvation. Be not afraid, when occasion calls for it, to profess your Catholic faith openly and boldly before outsiders by blessing yourselves. For if you are a Catholic worthy of the name, on such occasions your heart will experience the same sentiment as the great Apostle Paul expressed: "God forbid that I should glory save in the Cross of Our Lord Jesus Christ."

III. Another memorial of the Cross of Calvary is the Crucifix. We read in the Bible that God having communicated to Moses on the mountain the plan of the Ark, said to him, "Go and make it according to the model which I have shown to thee." Similarly Christ has inspired the Church to employ images or imitations of the exemplar which He represented to the world on Mount Calvary. The Crucifix represents the Saviour hanging upon the Cross, bleeding, dying, imploring His Father for the pardon, not merely of the men who nailed Him to the Cross, but for us, too, and for all sinners who are debtors to God's justice. It is not necessary to tell you, for you know it by your own experience, how holy images help to cherish and stimulate pious thoughts and feelings. More rapidly and more impressively than the printed page they raise our minds to the things of God. Our nature is such that we are more strongly affected by what falls under our senses than we are by the pale abstractions of our intellect. Furthermore, when our feelings and emotions are strong, we are irresistibly prompted to employ some external means which may stand as their outward expression; and such embodiment of them serves to strengthen them. We love our country, and that feeling is symbolized in the flag of the nation. The sight of that emblem stirs our blood more strongly than does the most eloquent speech that ever fell from the orator's lips. We cherish indelibly in our hearts the memories and the faces of the loved ones who are no more with us. Those memories become more vivid, love glows more warmly as we gaze upon a picture of the departed. The affection which we entertained for the relative or friend, encompasses also his image and makes

it a sacred object in our eyes. Hence, the use of images in the Catholic Church is one of the evidences of the admirable way in which our religion adapts itself to the needs of the human heart, and enlists all the good tendencies of our nature in the work of our salvation. Naturally the most precious, the most venerable of all religious images is the image of our crucified Redeemer. It stands above the Tabernacle, to remind us that on the Altar beneath is renewed the sacrifice of Calvary. It is used in the administration of the Sacraments, and every other religious rite, to remind us that all our faith and all our hope is centered in the death of our Redeemer, that from His open heart, His pierced hands and feet flow the streams of grace and mercy. It is, or ought to be, in every Christian home, to consecrate it, and remind the members that they are followers of the crucified God. It is employed by the priest to touch the sinner's obdurate heart. How often, when human words have failed to awake the deadened conscience, has not a sight of the Crucifix, with the thorn-crowned head, the lacerated flesh, the extended arms, bruised face, the bleeding wounds in hands and feet, filled the sinner's heart with sorrow, and brought to his eyes blessed tears of compunction! How often has black, reckless despair been compelled to give place to hope and trust by the Crucifix? For who could despair as he looks upon the image which declares the extent of Christ's love for the sinner, and the price paid for his salvation to God's justice, by the Lamb of God who taketh away the sins of the world. Let us, my brethren, love the Crucifix, keep it in your house, in your bedroom and turn your eyes to it while you say your morning and night prayers. As you look upon it, it will carry your thoughts to Jesus, to His death upon Calvary; it will remind you that for love of you the Son of God humbled Himself unto death, even unto the death of the Cross. The Crucifix will, in an instant, tell you more eloquently than the most eloquent of preachers the wickedness of sin, and that the wages of sin is death, not temporal, but eternal. Be devout to the Crucifix and it will prove a powerful weapon to repel temptation; love it during life, and when it will be pressed to your dying lips and placed in your hands, that are soon to be cold and rigid, it will fill your soul with courage to pass on to meet Him, who by His Cross and Passion has opened to sinners the gates of paradise. Amen

## XXXV. PRAYER: ITS NECESSITY

BY THE RIGHT REV. JOHN S. VAUGHAN, D.D.

*SYNOPSIS.—Importance of the subject. What we mean by prayer; its paramount necessity; proved from Scripture, and theology; from the consideration of man's innate infirmity, because it is a condition imposed by God. The worst among the reprobate might have been saved, if only they had had recourse to prayer, e. g., the rebel angels. The heresy of Luther contains a partial truth—how. Strength always given to those who ask for it. Explicit promise contained in I Cor. x. 13. How often should we pray? Special occasions: when violently tempted, when in danger of death, when exposed to any specially great calamity. Some examples. The more we realize the power of prayer the more difficult is it to explain man's neglect of it. How we should pray. The children of the world wiser than we are. Resolutions. If we pray well, all will go well.*

To-day, my dear brethren, I am about to speak to you upon one of the most important and practical subjects that can possibly engage your attention. I mean the subject of prayer, which must always enter so very largely into the texture of every truly Christian life.

And what do we really understand by prayer? In the widest acceptation of the term it means simply, *the having recourse to God.*

Without referring to any special form of prayer we will speak of prayer in general, and point out its vital importance; not only for such persons as are aspiring after perfection, but for every one who desires to save his soul, and to escape the fires of hell.

The holy Scriptures speak very clearly on this point, and are never weary of pointing out the duty we lie under, of having recourse to God in all our necessities. "We ought always to pray, and not to faint," says St. Luke (xviii), and here "ought" (*oportet*) clearly implies a real obligation. So, again, when St. Matthew (xxvi) says: "Watch and pray, *lest ye enter into temptation,*" he evidently implies that without prayer we shall not succeed in vanquishing temptation. Similarly, when Our Lord himself tells us to ask and we shall receive, to seek and we shall find, and to knock and it shall be opened to us, He certainly infers that he who will not take the trouble to ask, and seek, and knock, can not reckon on receiving the help that he requires.

Theologians are agreed that prayer is not merely a help and a safeguard, but that for adults it is a necessary means of grace

which none can continue to neglect without peril to their salvation. And this doctrine is founded on the undoubted fact that man is utterly helpless when left to himself. "Without me," says our blessed Lord, "you can do nothing" (John xv, 5). The divine assistance is needed not merely to enable us to triumph over exceptional difficulties, and to overcome special and great obstacles, but to take even one step in advance; nay, even to keep steadfastly and perseveringly in our present state of grace. St. Paul, speaking under the influence of the Holy Spirit, goes so far as to say that not only is it impossible to become virtuous and holy without God's help, but that we can not even so much as wish for, or aspire after sanctity apart from His grace. "We are not sufficient to think anything (*i. e.*, anything good) of ourselves, as of ourselves, but our sufficiency is from God" (II Cor. iii, 5).

God is the sole master of His gifts, and may assign what conditions He pleases for their bestowal. Did He so will, He might, of course, confer His favors without our asking. But this is not according to His plan. On the contrary, He wishes that we should recognize Him as our loving Father, protector and friend, and that we should realize our absolute dependence upon His generosity. Hence, He imposes a condition and that is that we should turn our thoughts to Him, and lift up our feeble hands in supplication before He rains down upon us His heavenly gifts. As a pious and learned theologian says: "We believe that no one approaches to be saved, except at the invitation of God; that no one who is invited actually works out his salvation, save by the help of God; and that no one merits this help, unless he prays." This doctrine is the doctrine of all theologians, even though expressed in somewhat different words. Thus, St. Thomas lays it down (P. 3, q. xxxix, a. 5): "After Baptism continual prayer is necessary to man in order that he should reach heaven; for, though by Baptism our sins are remitted there still remains concupiscence, to assail us from within, as well as the world and the devil to assail us from without." He further explains this when he observes that "prayer is necessary not in order that God may know our necessities, but in order that we may be compelled to acknowledge Him as the one and only supreme source of all our graces." In fact, prayer is to the soul what food is to the body, the source of life and health and strength. And just as God does not provide us with corporal nourishment unless we bestir ourselves to obtain it; but obliges us

to till the ground, and to sow corn and plant vines, so that we may have bread to eat, and wine to drink, so has He ordained that we should exert ourselves, and humbly and earnestly pray, before He will feed and nourish our souls by His grace.

Spiritual writers declare that even the worst sinners would have been preserved from falling had they only made a proper use of this powerful means of defense. Speaking of Adam's disobedience, St. Thomas boldly affirms that "he sinned because he had not recourse to the divine assistance." And the same statement is made by St. Gelasius regarding the rebel angels: "Receiving the grace of God in vain, they could not persevere, because they did not pray."

And, if the angels and our first parents could not maintain themselves in innocence, though they were created without sin and without concupiscence, how far more impossible must it be for us to persevere without prayer, who are born in original sin, and with so many and such strong natural inclinations to evil.

Indeed, some heretics, such as Luther and Iansenius, have gone so far as to say that some of the commands of God are impossible for man, in his present state, to observe. It is quite true that man can not observe the law of God, nor obey His precepts, *if he neglect the duty of prayer;* but he can always obtain grace enough, and more than enough, by the asking; and so can always fulfil the divine commands. Since God is infinitely just and merciful, and will always come to the assistance of those who fly to Him for aid. Moreover, He has promised not once, but again and again to listen to the prayer of those who appeal to Him with confidence. "If you ask the Father anything in my name, He will give it to you"; and, again, "ask, and you shall receive."

If a man complains of his weakness; if he declares that temptation is too strong and that he frequently succumbs, not because he is vicious, but because he is weak, let him remember that God has supplied a remedy in prayer, and that one who will not make use of the remedy has no excuse but his own culpable negligence. "If you have not the requisite strength," writes St. James, "why do you not ask for it? *You have it not, because you ask it not*" (James iv, 2). Hence the truth of St. Paul's words is abundantly borne out: "God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that which you are able, but will make also with the temptation issue, that you may be able to bear it" (I Cor. x, 13). Consequently, we

must be of good heart, and realize that, whatever may be the dangers encompassing us, and whatever may be the violence of the temptations assailing us, God will always give us the victory, if we make a generous use of prayer. Even the weakest and the lowliest amongst us may exclaim with the same trust and fearlessness as St. Paul himself: "I can do *all* things in Him who strengtheneth me" (Phil. iv, 13).

The question may here be asked, How often must we pray? The evangelist, St. Luke, says, "We must pray always" (xviii, 1). This does not, of course, mean that we are to be always on our knees invoking God, which is more than can be expected of mortal man, and would seriously interfere with other duties of life. It means that prayer should be frequent, and should form a regular practise of daily life; so that, just as we are continually exposed to danger we should ever have recourse to this powerful defense.

There are, however, certain occasions when the obligation presses upon us with greater insistence, and when we should be gravely at fault, if we neglected this means of salvation.

Three special occasions are pointed out by theologians. The first is when we find ourselves, whether voluntarily or involuntarily, exposed to any violent temptation. Perhaps our passions have been deeply stirred, and we feel ourselves strongly urged to some deed of vengeance, or of violence, or of lust. We grow conscious of our weakness, and of the need of some strong arm to defend us from ourselves. Then, like the Apostles, on the Lake of Galilee, amid the storm that threatened to overwhelm them, we must have recourse to God, and cry out, with all the fervor of our soul: "Salve nos, Domine, perimus!" ("Save us, O Lord, or we perish!") The neglect of prayer, under such circumstances, would argue not only great temerity, but almost a willingness, if not an actual desire, to indulge our passion and to commit sin.

Another occasion when prayer becomes especially urgent, is when we are in mortal sin, and, at the same time, in imminent danger of death. We stand then in very great danger of perishing everlastingly. The time remaining to us is short. We may soon grow unconscious. The devil, knowing his last opportunity is at hand, redoubles his efforts to secure the damnation of our souls. God alone can rescue us from his fangs, and bestow the grace of perfect sorrow; and, in order to obtain His assistance, it is our duty to address ourselves to Him with much earnestness and sincerity.

We are also especially bound to pray, when prayer seems the only means within our reach of avoiding any great calamity about to befall us, or those to whom we are specially bound, such as our own family or the State. If a great persecution breaks out, as in ancient Rome, under the pagan emperors, or as in England in the sixteenth century, and there is danger of apostasy and spiritual ruin, all should unite in earnest prayer to God; indeed, this should be done not only in times of spiritual, but even in times of temporal, affliction, as beseems a Christian and God-fearing people. When the great city of Ninive was threatened with destruction, the inhabitants united in earnest prayer and penance and so averted the calamity that seemed about to overwhelm them.

Or, to take another instance from the inspired pages, when the dreaded Holofernes lay siege to Bethulia, and it seemed almost certain to fall into the hands of the Assyrians, the people, with one accord, prayed fervently to God, humbled themselves before Him, and put ashes on their heads. And God sent them a deliverer in the person of Judith. At a yet later date, when St. Peter, the ruler of the infant Church, was cast into prison, men did not stand idle and wring their hands, but "prayer was made without intermission" for his delivery, and he was miraculously released by the ministry of an angel, as we read in the Acts of the Apostles.

In a similar spirit we, too, should turn to God when any great danger threatens us, and beg the divine assistance, full of confidence that He, whose providence extends over all, and whose hands are on the helm of our fragile bark, can lead us safely through the most dangerous storms to the harbor of peace at last.

One of the strangest and saddest experiences of life is to see how little the great majority, even of Christians, pray. When we think on the one hand how easy it is to kneel down and converse with God, and when, on the other hand, we think of the marvelous fruits to be gained by so doing, we are at a loss to understand that so few should give themselves up to this holy exercise.

Most men pray but little at the best of times, and even that little in a most distracted and perfunctory manner. On the slightest pretext they will shorten their customary devotions, even if they do not omit them altogether; and act as though prayer, instead of being the most important action of the day, were the very least.

Let us, at least, refuse to be influenced by such evil example, and resolve to pray not only regularly, but with the utmost attention

and devotion. So far as earnestness and attention are concerned we may indeed learn a valuable lesson from men of the world.

When a servant wishes to obtain some great favor from his master, or a prince from his king, he does not approach him with his mind wandering and distracted; he does not look now to the right and now to the left to see what is going on around him. He does not mutter with his lips while his heart is occupied with other things, but he addresses himself to his master with the greatest earnestness, he fixes his look upon him, he represents his claims with the utmost insistence, adduces every reason he can think of why he should not be refused, and proves by his whole attitude and comportment how strongly he desires to have his petition granted.

On the other hand, to watch most people praying to God, one would be led to suppose that they recognized neither the majesty of the sovereign they address nor their own poverty and dependence. One would think, indeed, that they cared little whether their prayers were granted or refused, that they were merely going through a form to which they attached little or no importance, and that they knelt and recited their paters and aves, or their litanies and hymns, merely because they are recited by others, and they did not wish to be singular.

What fruit can we expect from prayers said in such a manner?

Let us resolve for the future to attach more importance to this holy exercise, and, whenever we address ourselves to God, let us pause to reflect, firstly, upon the dignity and the majesty of Him to whom we appeal, and then on our own misery and dependence. There is no better way of securing that lowliness and humility of heart which is the first condition of efficacious prayer than by exciting our faith in the infinite perfections and the unapproachable holiness and mercy and compassion of Our Father, who is in heaven, and who rains down His favors and graces upon all those who have recourse to Him in a proper spirit.

If we pray well, then all will go well. If we neglect this primary duty, then the whole of our spiritual life will suffer.

## XXXVI. PRAYER: ITS EFFICACY

BY THE RIGHT REV. JOHN S. VAUGHAN, D.D.

*SYNOPSIS.—God is ever accessible and ready to hear our prayers—so unlike an earthly sovereign. God's tenderness and generosity commands us to ask—being infinitely rich, He can give without stint and without impoverishing Himself. He encourages us and wins our confidence by the example of an earthly parent. The efficacy of prayer; illustrated by the example of (a) Abraham, (b) Moses, (c) Elias, (d) Zachary. Our confidence should surpass even these saints of the Old Law, since we are now able to plead through the accomplished passion and death of Christ. All our prayers are "through Jesus Christ Our Lord." If our prayers are not answered, it is either (a) because our dispositions are faulty, or (b) because the gift we ask for would do us harm. Prayer always brings grace, but not always the grace we have in view. Since God is all wise, we must leave Him to answer our petitions in the way He sees is best. To ensure the highest efficacy to prayers we must offer them up through the pure hands of Mary. Who perseveres in prayer will be saved; who abandons prayer will be lost.*

One of the best proofs of God's goodness and love is His readiness to receive our prayers and supplications. If we wish to unburden ourselves about our difficulties or our sorrows to an earthly monarch we are at once confronted by endless obstacles. We have to wait till it suits his convenience to give us an audience; we often have to travel far, and to spend much time, and to take much trouble, before we are ushered into his presence, and even then, perhaps, he scarcely attends to our words, but hastens off to engage himself in more congenial occupation. God, on the contrary, is ever ready to harken to our prayers at all hours of the day and night, and will open His ears to our petitions, with such infinite tenderness and patience that we might almost imagine that there were no other creature in existence to solicit His attention.

He not only suffers us to address Him with the greatest familiarity, but He encourages and even commands us to do so, and is never better pleased than when we are asking Him for graces and blessings. Though He is infinitely great and exalted and we are so poor and unworthy, He neither despises nor repulses us, but treats us as a loving father treats his own children.

"Cry to me," He says, "and I will hear thee." "Call upon me, and I will deliver thee." "Everyone who asketh, receiveth," and "he that seeketh, findeth," and, again, "All things whatsoever you ask, when you pray, believe that you shall receive them, and it shall be granted unto you." And yet more forcibly still: "Amen, amen, I say unto you, if you ask the Father anything in my name, he will give it to you."

These are very clear and very emphatic promises, made by One who can neither deceive nor be deceived, and yet they are but a few chosen out of many similar texts.

The promises they contain are founded upon God's infinite power and love. He is not like an earthly sovereign, whose riches are finite, and who can not give largely and generously to all without impoverishing himself; but He is the infinite Creator, who can give without suffering any loss, and who can enrich all without in any way diminishing the exhaustless treasury of His graces.

And as, on the one hand, He possesses all things, and can do all things, so, on the other hand, His affection for us is so strong that He knows not how to refuse our prayers. As the saints have so often expressed it, "He is more ready to give than we are to receive."

In order to impress us with that fact He makes use of a beautiful similitude. He bids us reflect on the natural generosity and love of an earthly father for his own children. And points out how such love, even in the imperfect earthly parent, causes him to do all that he can for his own offspring. "Which of you," he asks, "if he ask his father bread, will he give him a stone; or a fish, will he for a fish give him a serpent; or if he shall ask an egg, will he reach him a scorpion? If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father from heaven give the good spirit to them that ask Him" (Luke xi, 12).

Truly! If an earthly father, though full of imperfections and human weaknesses, is ever ready to come to the rescue of his suffering children, and can not close his ears to their cries for help and protection, how immeasurably more ready and anxious will be the all-loving and compassionate heart of our infinitely perfect Father in heaven to come to our aid in all our difficulties, and in all our wants and necessities.

The inspired Scriptures are full of the most startling and the most marvelous examples of the efficacy of prayer, and we can not do

better than refer to them here, in order that we may the better realize the value of this great weapon, that God has so mercifully put within our hands.

Consider the history of Abraham, and how he pleaded for the wicked cities that were doomed to destruction. The Lord said to Abraham, "The cry of Sodom and Gomorrah is multiplied, and their sin is become exceedingly grievous." He even declared He would utterly destroy them and all their inhabitants. Then Abraham was struck with fear, for though the men among whom he lived were wicked, he loved them as neighbors. So, drawing near to God in prayer, he said: "Wilt thou destroy the just with the wicked? If there be fifty just men in the city, shall they perish with the rest, and wilt thou not spare that place for the sake of the fifty just?" And God replied, "If I find fifty just men within the walls of Sodom I will spare the whole place for their sake." And Abraham said, "Seeing I have once begun, I will speak again to my Lord, whereas I am but dust and ashes. If there be five less than fifty just persons in the city, wilt thou destroy it?" And the Lord said, "I will not destroy it if I find five and forty." Abraham continued to plead in this manner till the Lord at last said to him: "I will not destroy it even if there be as many as ten just men." Then the Lord disappeared, and Abraham returned to his tent. The ten just men were not to be found, and the angels of God's wrath were, accordingly, sent to destroy the condemned cities. But, nevertheless, so powerful is the prayer of a just man that God would have reversed His decision, and have spared even these sinful and impure cities, at the prayer of His servant Abraham, if but half a score of just men had been found among their inhabitants.

Or call to mind the power of prayer as illustrated by the case of Moses, another faithful servant of God. We read that when Moses was away from the camp, in close communion with God, for forty days and forty nights, the children of Israel fell into the atrocious sin of idolatry. Moses was exceedingly angry, and ordered the sons of Levi to take their swords and slay every man whom they found practising idolatry. They obeyed, and put to death about twenty-three thousand men on that one day. But the following day Moses again ascended the mountain and earnestly entreated the Lord to spare the rest of His rebellious and ungrateful people. But the Lord said: "Let me alone that I may destroy them." Then Moses bethought himself of the wonderful

efficacy of prayer and, nothing doubting, began to entreat and implore for mercy. "This people hath sinned, it is true, but I beseech thee, have mercy upon them. Either forgive them this trespass, or, if thou wilt not, then strike me out of the book that thou hast written."

Here, again, prayer proved all availing. God granted his petition, and, through the powerful intercession of Moses, the people were given another chance.

The scriptural history of the great prophet Elias is rich in instances of the efficacy of prayer to move the heart of God, and to bring down His graces and blessings. Even St. James, in his Epistle, can cite no better example to move us to confidence and trust. He observes that, "Elias was a man, passible like us, and with prayer he prayed that it might not rain upon the earth, and it rained not for three years and six months. And he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth brought forth her fruit" (v, 16-18. But, marvelous as this was, he brought about still more wonderful results by the same simple means. He raised the dead body of the son of the poor widow of Sarepta to life; he multiplied the pot of meal and the little cruse of oil, which was all she had in her house, so that they sufficed for her sustenance during the three years of scarcity; and worked many other wonders through the power of his prayers.

Another instance recorded in Holy Writ is that of Zachary and his pious consort, Elizabeth. They were childless, and for many years they continued to pray that they might have a son. Their prayers seemed to all appearances to be offered up in vain, yet, so far from losing confidence, they persevered in laying the great desire of their hearts before God. At last God determined to reward their trust, and bestowed upon them even more than they expected or asked for. They had begged for a son, who might succeed his father in the priestly office, but what God, in His generosity, actually gave them was much more, viz., a son who became a great saint, a renowned prophet of God, and the precursor of the divine Redeemer of the world. Such was the rich reward of their steadfastness and perseverance in offering their petition to God.

These instances, which might be multiplied almost indefinitely, are all taken from the inspired pages of the Holy Bible. They help us to realize how ready God is to receive our petitions and to come

to our assistance in the day of trial and tribulation, and should instil into us a great love of prayer. Indeed, we should address ourselves to God with even greater confidence than the seers and prophets of old. They lived before the time of Christ. They lived before the incarnation and passion and death of the eternal Son of God had appeased the just anger of God, aroused by sin, and had disposed Him to greater leniency and compassion. We no longer plead alone, but we unite ourselves with Jesus, and taking our stand beneath the Cross, stained red with the Blood of this spotless Victim, we offer up our petitions through His bitter passion and death. There is scarcely a prayer offered by Christians throughout the world, whether in private, or whether in the solemn masses or public liturgy, which is not offered "through Jesus Christ Our Lord." Whether we praise or petition or give thanks, it is always "through the same Jesus Christ Our Lord, who, with the Father and the Holy Ghost, reigns world without end. Amen." Yet, in spite of our greater advantages, and the repeated promises of Christ, how many there are among us who complain that our prayers are not heard. Is there any justice in the complaint, and, if there be, how are we to account for it? From what does it arise?

It may rise, my brethren, from either of two causes. Either we do not ask in the manner we ought; or else we do not ask for the thing that is good for us, and helpful to our salvation.

We are wanting in faith, or in humility, or in earnestness. Perhaps we do not put our heart into our petitions, but approach the throne of God, distracted, preoccupied, and with little real attention. Or we may pray without constancy and perseverance, and so reap little fruit from our spasmodic efforts. Whatever the precise defect may be, on examination, we shall invariably find that the fault lies at our own door, and that the remedy is to be sought in a greater attention to our interior dispositions.*

Or if, on the other hand, our dispositions be perfect, and yet our petition is refused, then it is clear that we are asking for something that it is far better for us not to have. When God, in His great wisdom, sees that some object, upon which we have set our hearts, will, if granted, draw us into sin, or endanger our salvation, His very mercy will lead Him to refuse our request. We do not really know even ourselves, and often fail to read aright the secrets of our hearts. We ask a favor, not realizing what its effect

*"You ask, and receive not, *because you ask amiss*" (St. James iv, 3).

may be upon us, and are unhappy because we are not given what might easily prove our ruin.

Even the most indulgent mother will not allow her infant to pluck and eat the beautiful berries of the deadly night shade, however much he may clamor for them. Nor will a loving father lend sharp and cutting implements to his children to play with, however earnestly they may petition him, because he loves them far too much to allow them to injure themselves by playing with edged tools. Now, God deals with us in a similar manner. How often it happens that in our ignorance and folly we seek for things that may become a source of dangerous temptations to us. We ask for health, when, perhaps, God sees that nothing but sickness and pain will save us from some act of folly; we ask for riches, not knowing that riches will, perhaps, fill us with pride and sinful arrogance; or we ask for a long life, when God knows that it is only by cutting short our career, and calling us away in the flower of our age, that we shall be saved from the contaminating influences of the world. "He was taken away," as the Scriptures say of such a one, "lest wickedness should alter his understanding, or deceit beguile his soul" (Wisdom, iv, 11).

God knows all things, and can see, with the utmost exactness, the future effects of present circumstances, and how the introduction of any fresh element will turn the scale in one direction or another. But we have no power to look into the future, nor can we with any degree of certainty judge of the course of events. Hence, it is not only a duty, it is likewise simple common sense and sheer prudence to leave ourselves and all our affairs in the hands of Him who knows. God loves us; yes, more truly than we love ourselves. But with this immeasurable love is conjured infinite wisdom. Hence, if we really desire our welfare and happiness, we must abandon all to Him. We may ask, of course, for whatever we desire, but always in complete submission to His adorable will; and in so far as He, from whom nothing lies hid, sees it to be expedient. He will not let us suffer on account of our confidence; and if in His mercy, and for wise reasons, He defers or altogether refuses our request, He will most certainly, grant us something better and more really to our advantage.

Whatever happens, our prayers are never lost. They do not sound in listless ears. They do not pass unheeded, but procure for us innumerable graces, blessings and favors according as God sees

we need them; and, if we do not get what we ask, we may reckon, with perfect faith, on getting something far better.

The promises of God, so clearly and so frequently made, are too explicit to leave us in any doubt, on this point. "Cry to me," He says, "and I will hear thee" (Jerem. xxxiii, 3). "He will surely have pity on thee, at the voice of thy cry; as soon as he shall hear he will answer thee" (Isai. xxx, 19). "Amen, amen, I say to you, if you ask the Father anything in my name he will give it to you" (John xvi, 23). "The prayer of him that humbleth himself shall pierce the clouds" (Eccles. xxxv, 21). "This is the confidence which we have toward God, that whatsoever we shall ask, according to his will, he heareth us" (I John v, 14).

These, and innumerable other texts, prove to us how ready, and even anxious, God is to befriend us and to help us in all our necessities.

Let us then frequently have recourse to Him. And, in order to render our prayer more powerful and efficacious, let us offer it up through the pure and immaculate hands of Mary. To ask her to pray for us and with us, is a sure means of commanding success. She is our mother, and looks upon us as her children, and will not only present our petitions before the throne of mercy, but will also, if we earnestly entreat, unite her voice with ours, and make intercessions for us, and St. Bernard assures us that no one ever had recourse to her without being heard and helped.

The importance and the efficiency of prayer can not be over-estimated. It is the key, the golden key, that opens out the treasury of divine favors. It is an inexhaustible source of strength, and light, and grace. Who perseveres in prayer is certain to be saved, whereas even the sublimest saint on earth will soon sink low and lower into the filthy slough of sin if he omit this holy exercise, and give up the special and simple means prescribed by Jesus Christ, when He says, "Ask, and you will receive."

# XXXVII. THE LORD'S PRAYER

BY THE REV. WILLIAM GRAHAM

## I

"Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name."

*SYNOPSIS—Grotto near the Mount of Olives, the place where the Lord's Prayer was first uttered. Story of its composition; delivered by Our Lord in answer to the request of the disciples. Its characteristics—simplicity, depth of meaning, wisdom, logic and beauty.*

*I. It is an epitome of God's dealings with His creatures. Its recitation part of our daily duty. Its constituent parts: (1) introduction, (2) seven petitions, (3) conclusion. Meaning, purpose and lessons in the introduction and first petition. The force of term Father—the sentiments it awakens. Why Christ made use of it. God is truly our Father. The force of the term heaven.*

*II. The Lord's Prayer is a petition for all the things we need. The glory of God is to be sought above all things. All creation gives glory to God. Man, the crown of creation, must seek the same. This is the meaning of "hallowed be thy name." But to be reverenced and honored God must be (1) known, (2) loved, (3) served. In this prayer we pray that all may know, love and serve their Creator and their Father.*

*Introduction.*—Hard by the spot on the Mount of Olives that marks the scene of the Ascension is a grotto, now turned into a chapel, the walls of which are covered with the Lord's Prayer in all the chief languages of the world, old and new. Tradition fixes this grotto as the place wherein divine lips first uttered this sublime and world-famed prayer. Whether the exact spot or not, it worthily recalls the origin of a prayer that daily and hourly rises from the hearts and lips of countless human beings, "belonging to every tribe and tongue and nation," to the common Father of mankind, voicing in words simple and sublime all their actual and possible needs.

You all doubtless remember the story of its composition. The disciples, impressed by Our Lord's repeated exhortations to life-long and persevering prayer, His ever urging upon them its power and importance and necessity, interrupted His great Sermon on the Mount by the words, "Lord, teach us to pray." Then and there He gave utterance to the golden words we now call the Lord's Prayer, or "Our Father." With the Creed and Commandments,

it ranks as a constituent part of our common Christianity. Many, indeed, would make this prayer the germ and kernel of the religion of Christ. Its simplicity, its depth of meaning, its wisdom and logic, and application to all our possible wants, in the way of prayer, prove the author divine. There is more Godlike thought embedded in its fifty-six words than in any other composition of its length in the language. Happily, no controversies rage round the Our Father. It is a prayer in which all believers can join. The most hopeless sceptic and incorrigible sinner, as well as the devoutest child of holy Church, feel the charm, the unction, the power, of the Lord's Prayer. It is a sort of magical soul-music, in which each human heart finds the key and melody that suit their mood. Its seven petitions might be called the seven lamps of Christendom, as it shows the light of Christ on every phase of human mind. And no wonder, for His divine breath coined the words that compose it —words which now ascend, like wreaths of incense, in all tongues, and under all skies, before the throne of grace. Saints and sinners, just and unjust alike, recite this prayer. Indeed, where it is said there is always hope that even the most abandoned prodigals will "arise and go to their father." Its recital at all is like breathing in the body the last remnant of a sign of God's presence in the soul. It is this beautiful prayer that, in the four following discourses, we shall undertake to explain.

I. The prayer itself is so touchingly clear and simple that it carries its message to every heart, so much so, indeed, that it seems almost profane to analyze or dissect it. But the more we examine even the simplest of God's works the more admirable they seem. Reflection brings to light most complex mysteries in apparently the simplest and most commonplace objects in Nature—a drop of water, *e. g.,* a sunbeam, the song of birds, or scent of flowers. We see herein the mind of God at work, ordering all things, "in number, weight and measure," "reaching from end to end mightily, and disposing all things sweetly." So is it with the Lord's Prayer. It is an epitome of God's relations and dealings with His creatures. It sums up, in a measure, theology, doctrinal and moral. It is a sort of spiritual cell which involves, and from which by reflection we can evolve, the whole body of Christ's teaching. Hence, its constant use by the Church in her liturgy, in the Mass, the divine office, the Sacraments and sacramentals, as well as her binding all her children to learn it by heart. To make it part of our daily

tribute of worship, in morning and evening prayers, is deemed by all a matter of conscience—a duty we strictly owe to almighty God.

As you are all doubtless aware, the Lord's Prayer is made up of a preface, or introduction, in the words, "Our Father who art in heaven," followed by seven petitions, or requests, that form the body of the prayer. The first three of these petitions concern God and His glory, the leading purpose of all existence; the remaining four deal in close logical order with our own spiritual and bodily needs. The prayer concludes with the Hebrew word, "Amen," denoting an ardent wish that the seven petitions enumerated may be granted. To-day we shall briefly state the meaning, main purpose, and lessons contained in the introduction and first petition of the prayer.

"When you pray," say, "Our Father who art in heaven." Mark how Our Lord assumes that His followers *do* pray. Prayer is the bed-rock of all religion, true and false. It is the one point in which believers in a God agree. Were prayer of petition a mere waste of time and speech, were God's only reply to it the empty echo of our own words, did not prayer enter as a great spiritual force within the scope and range of His providence, were there insuperable difficulties and hindrances in the fixed order of Nature against it, Our Lord would surely have warned us against it, or qualified or limited its use; but no! assuming prayer as the basis and groundwork of all religion, He himself composed a form of prayer entirely made up of petitions for our daily use. "When you pray, say, Our Father who art in heaven"; what a mental leap is involved in these words! The tiny creature of a day, passing guest, on a world, itself a speck in the universe, is asked by God himself to look up to the Eternal Being, "who made heaven and earth," and address Him, not by the cold, fear-inspiring terms of Creator, Ruler, Absolute Sovereign, but by the tender, love-inspiring, hopeful term of Father. Just to think, we have a Father in heaven who knows, loves, and is interested in us, and whom, in turn, we are privileged to know and love—to whom we can draw near boldly, closely, trustfully, like children winding their arms round a father's neck or climbing on a mother's knee. How crushing and overwhelming is the thought of the God that framed the skies, and yet how comforting and hope-inspiring is that same God revealed to us on the threshold of the Lord's Prayer! "Shew us the Father and it suffiseth us," said Philip. And this is just what Christ does every

time we say the "Our Father." What wealth of pure, deep, and holy affection lies hid in the word father. No link stronger, harder, more lasting than that which binds a father to his children. Even in Nature love flows downward to the offspring rather than upward to the parents—a sad illustration of our forgetfulness, of our ingratitude to almighty God. The very word Father was chosen by Him, whom to see was to see the Father, to express the intense love and deep interest taken by God in each and every one of the creatures made "in his own image and likeness." We are members of an immense family, it is true, the human race, scattered up and down all places and times, yet to God it is no larger, nay, infinitely smaller, than the smallest human family is to us. Each member is the object and center of infinite love, tenderness, and care. Each child of Adam, howsoever wayward, ungrateful and unfilial, is "as the apple of his eye." "Can a mother forget her child . . . so may I forget you." We can not be too confident of grace and mercy and favor from Him whose divine Lips have taught us to call "Our Father"; and, howsoever far we wander from our Father's house, we can still, for we have the right, as children, to "arise and go to our Father."

True, a good father, worthy of his name and office, punishes and caresses, both smites and embraces. Duty is severe and grave. Its absence or infringement necessarily involves correction. Disease needs medicine, and medicine is often bitter. Turbulence and lack of discipline must be repressed by force. Crime brings punishment, and God, though a father, is withal a ruler, just, strong, and resistless. Correction is part of a father's duty. Knowing all this, and too sadly conscious of our sinfulness, we say, with the prodigal, "Father, I have sinned and am no more worthy to be called thy son"; or, with holv David, "Even though he slay me, yet will I trust in him."

Some people appear to think that the sole function of a father is to provide, forgive and forget, and treat filial and unfilial children alike; but we must remember that training and correction are only the obverse of love. Indulgence is often weakness and injustice; and though in God "mercy is above all his works," yet is He a "searcher of hearts" and supremely just judge. But his severity falls only on the impenitent. We may, for we are free, leave His house and herd with swine. We may shut Him morally out of our lives; we may bar the doors of our heart again Him; the arm raised

to bless and embrace we may compel to strike; yet is He ever ready, in response to a contrite heart, to "blot out all our iniquities" and "cleanse us from our sins." "The fatted calf is ever killed, the doors ever flung open, and the heart and arms of a heavenly Father ever extended to welcome the prodigal on his return."

This one phrase, "Our Father who art in heaven," is in itself a full unveiling of God and His attributes. It is Church, Bible and prayer-book all in one. All that is perplexing and hard to believe in life and faith grow clear to one who anchors his soul to the thought that God is our Father, and that we, by nature, grace and adoption, are His children. He has infinitely more than a good earthly father's willingness to help, with boundless wisdom and power thrown in. Surely, then, we may approach with confidence His "throne of grace."

Inequality is not favoritism. He distributes His gifts, like His spirit, where He listeth. All can not be first, though all share largely, and more than their due, in His gifts. The lowest and most degraded types of mankind, the foulest and most loathsome sinners, can all claim to address Him as Father, "who maketh his sun to shine upon the just and unjust." Men are all one family in origin and descent, as tradition, science and faith unite in declaring. Hence, the word *"our,"* not *"my,"* Father, to show that we are all members of one family, and that we should love, pray for, and interest ourselves in, one another. Indeed, the introduction to the Lord's Prayer ever calls to mind the two great central truths of our common Christianity, the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of men. Were men only to live up to, and act upon, this truth, they would realize the wildest dreams of the most advanced reformers. Earth would be transformed into a paradise. Our Father in heaven more than provides abundantly for all. "He openeth his hand and filleth with plenty every living creature" in very truth. Greed and hate hinder the just distribution of the gifts wherewith earth, sea and sky teem. There are no famines among the birds and fishes. We say "Our Father who art in heaven" to show that where God is, there is heaven. Any soul that feels and realizes the ever-present God *is* in heaven. His absence—I mean in a special sense—for God is everywhere—is hell. The godless are already there. The vision of God is bliss. To know God, to see Him and love Him, and in that vision to "love the brethren," is heaven on earth, the necessary preliminary of heaven hereafter. We might

linger for hours on the beauty and suggestiveness of the words, "Our Father who art in heaven," like the little shepherd boy of Auvergne, who could never get beyond them, so overpowered was he by the thought of having God for a Father. But we must hurry on to the body of the Lord's Prayer, the first petition of which, "Hallowed be thy name," will now briefly occupy our attention.

II. The Lord's Prayer is a one of petition for graces, favors, good things, in short, that we need or desire. Now the glory of God is the first and supreme good. It is the sole and whole end, aim, purpose, object of all things, actual and possible, and should hold the first place in the mind and heart of all creatures endowed with reason. This purpose colors life and makes it intelligible. It is the antithesis of selfishness, which invariably ends in sin. Sin is but a form of selfishness. Some say, put God, whom we see not, to one side, and live for our fellow-men, whom we see. But such a purpose is aimless and irrational. We ought to live in and for others, but solely because He who made us all, for His own glory, wishes it so and inspires us with mutual love. Believe me, there is no true, lasting love and sacrifice for others not founded on love of God. God first, His glory must be the chief aim and object of life. Before creation, outside God, there was nothing. All was empty void. He made things for His own honor and glory, nor could He have had any other end outside Himself. But He lavishes His Fatherly love—pours Himself out, so to say, on His creatures—His children. Every flower that grows is a work of infinite tenderness and love. Creatures not endowed with reason serve Him—have to serve His purpose, are slaves of His laws. Water must seek its level, a stone must fall to the ground. Our own bodies, with their complex mechanism—our minds, too, and wills—are subject to law, *i. e.*, to God's will. But within certain limits we are free; and God expects, and justly, naturally expects, to use a human expression, that we should render Him free service—in other words, that we should seek, not *self*, not *our* wills, but Him and His glory. All creation is a hymn of praise to the glory of the Creator, and we have to try to be part of the harmony, not of the discord, of that hymn. Evil is not God's doing, but man's undoing and marring God's work. There is no other explanation. Abuse of free will is the best, if not the only, solution of the discord of of life. Now in the first petition of the Lord's Prayer we pray for the supreme good, the glory of God, effected by hallowing His

name. The cry of the ideal man—the Man-God, Our Lord—should also be ours, if we would be, I do not say supernatural, but even rational. "Father, glorify thy name," "not my will but thine be done." "Not to us, O Lord, but to thy name, give glory" (Ps. cxiii, 9).

Not only does this first petition give expression to a prayer, it also implies a duty—the main duty, indeed, of all who are privileged to know the true God—zeal for the honor and glory of His name. It is not the exclusive work of the clergy to promote the knowledge and love of God, it is binding on every child of holy Church in his or her respective sphere. We can not too often call to mind that it is not the cult of self, or our fellow-creatures, that is the main purpose of life—no, but the hallowing of God's name, the bringing back of all things to their source and spring in God. If we thought less of self and its petty needs and wants, if we looked more to others, and, above all, to almighty God, we should lead truer, nobler, happier lives. Every life is out of tune, out of center, out of its orbit, that is not moving toward and attracted by almighty God, and, in its measure, attracting others. That all creatures, but specially that all rational creatures, should direct their lives and energies to the main purpose of existence, the glory of God and its expression, in the exaltation of His holy name, is what we pray for in saying "Hallowed be thy name."

The precise gist of this petition, however, is best expressed in the words of the Catechism, "We pray herein that God may be known, loved and served by all His creatures." The term *hallow* is an old English word, meaning "to consecrate, treat as holy or sacred, to reverence." Now God's name can not be *hallowed* unless He is known. To know God is to love and reverence His holy name. It is a word that breathes holiness, love and awe. Nor is His throne altogether set in mystery and cloud. To a reverent and prayerful mind He does not fail to make His presence felt. "In him we live, move and have our being." Not a leaf that rustles in the wind, or a cloud that flits across the sky, that does not draw aside somewhat the veil that screens the first cause of all, and thus, in a manner, "show us the Father." It is a lie to say we know not God, and can not know Him. He lurks behind every secondary cause. The mind instinctively bounds to the supreme, infinite, unlimited cause wherein to rest and find an explanation of all difficulties. This natural knowledge of God, inherent in reason, is the

key of wisdom. Without it the universe is an unintelligible puzzle. Reason postulates God; though men, in their pride, choose another name to mask Him. The very material world is flooded with divine light, making God known; but in science, as in every other department, there are bigots; and "the mind of the bigot," as someone has well said, "is like the pupil of the eye, the more light you throw on it the more it contracts." If people do not see God in the world —silently working in Nature, "reaching from end to end mightily, and disposing all things sweetly"—it is because they neither *wish* nor *pray* to see Him; and "none so blind as they who will not see." In the first petition of the Lord's Prayer we pray both for sight and light—we join the royal Psalmist in desiring, above every other blessing, that "the light of God's countenance may shine upon us; for, alas! even in the strongest light there are many who do not see."

Though we come to know God by reason and conscience, the main source of this knowledge is faith. Passion and ignorance and prejudice often blind the reason and stifle conscience, but faith furnishes a higher and a stronger light. "Hallowed be thy name" is an earnest cry for faith—a prayer that those who have lost it by unbelief, heresy, or doubt may recover it, that pagans and all others in error may be enlightened, that missions to heathen lands may be multiplied and strengthened, so that, in the words of Isaias, "The knowledge of God may spread over the earth as the covering waters, the sea."

Furthermore, to hallow God's name is to love it. There are men and women whom to know is to love. If this is true of creatures, whose claims on our love and admiration, whose character, beauty, strength, wisdom, are mere distant echoes of those of God—if a tiny speck or drop is such, what must the spring or source, the ocean of God's loveableness and beauty, be? To hallow God's name is to love its bearer. God is love, He is a consuming fire, and as well say the sun's rays do not warm when they shine as to say that we really know God without loving Him. There must be obliquity of vision if we do not. There are many, alas! who know and love almost everything but God—nay, who hate and contemn His holy Name, who utter that adorable Name, not in love and reverence, but in ribaldry and contempt. Pray, then, earnestly, in uttering this petition, that not only you, but all men, may come to the knowledge of the truth, and that this knowledge may grow into fervent love—that the just may learn to love Him more—that

the tepid and careless, whose love has waxed cold, may regain and redouble their past fervor—that sinners may be converted, and, like penitent Magdalen, "be forgiven much, because they love much."

But not merely does the word hallow involve knowledge and love, it also includes service. In praying that His Name be hallowed all the world over, we implore God so to dispose events and so to influence men's wills that their knowledge and love of God may lead to lifelong, faithful service. A holy, well-ordered life is the highest tribute we can offer to the glory of God. The regular, constant observance of law, the beautiful order and harmony thence resulting that we see in Nature, blindly obeying its Maker, must in some way be reflected in our ready, prompt and free submission to the rules and laws of conduct—making up what we call duty. This duty done for God is free service, and by it we hallow God's Name. In the first petition of the Lord's Prayer we crave not merely for the light of faith and joy of love, but for strength to carry out in conduct His holy law, which is the test and touchstone of both. "He that hath my commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me." This is the duty or debt we owe to Him. A life of devoted service, particularly in those points directly dealing with almighty God, is the "light shining before men," which Our Lord tells us to hold aloft, "that they may glorify your Father who is in heaven."

The phrase "On earth as it is in heaven," though appended to the third petition, really belongs to all three. Our zeal should be so great, our desire to know, love and serve God so intense, that we take the blessed in heaven as our models. It is an ideal so high that it ever recedes, like a mountain top, stretching to the clouds; but we must never stop, but ever strive, to hallow God's holy Name, as perfectly as the saints above. Even in this wicked world we must unwearily strive to promote the honor and glory of God, and beg God Our Father to second our efforts, so that our worship of Him, our hallowing His adorable Name, may, if possible, be as complete as if we actually beheld Him face to face in the kingdom of heaven. This is the spirit in which the truly heavenly minded should ever say, "Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name."

## XXXVIII. THE LORD'S PRAYER

BY THE REV. WILLIAM GRAHAM

### II

"Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven."

*SYNOPSIS.—The advancement of the kingdom of god and the fulfilment of His holy will should be the prayer and desire of all hearts.*

*I. Man's earnest prayer has ever been and will always be for the coming of the kingdom of God. God is the infinite sovereign Master. We feel the need of His guidance and authority, hence we beg Him to become our Ruler. Liberty demands authority. History proves this. We must obey God willingly or unwillingly. His law rules in the (1) kingdom of Nature, (2) of grace, and (3) of glory. God is not a slave to His own law, and, therefore, He can answer our prayers. In the order of grace, God rules, yet so as to leave us free. To have God's kingdom, then, we must surrender our bodies, minds, souls to His law. God and self can not rule together. God rules not only the individual, but also the whole Church. This is a real empire, and the world's essential happiness, its peace and success are involved in the existence and welfare of this kingdom.*

*II. In God's kingdom His will is law; it is the supreme standard of life and conduct. He will grant all that is good for us. He wills only our sanctification. His will must be accomplished. He permits evil only that good may be brought out of it. God wills the best in every department. God rules through the Ten Commandments, the expressions of His will. Resignation to His holy will a necessity under all circumstances. All Nature teaches us resignation and obedience; the result is harmony. Beg of Him grace to do His holy will.*

*Introduction.*—In our previous discourse we dealt with the introduction and first petition of the Lord's Prayer. To-day we deal with the second and third petitions, embodying our desire that God's reign over souls may spread, and that His supreme will may be the standard law of action to the free creatures that form His kingdom, "Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven." The first three petitions expressive of our resire for the hallowing of God's Name in and through our knowledge, love and service of God; the advance of His kingdom or sway over men singly and collectively; and the fulfilment of His will in the observance of the laws of His kingdom, taken together, form the first part of the body of the prayer, and should hold the first place in our desires and in the utterance of those desires in prayer. They

show zeal for the glory of God, to which all else is subordinate. They express, too, the first duty and supreme needs of men as a body in relation to God.

I. The perpetual longing, the long-drawn-out sigh of expectancy, the prolonged prayer of good people, past and present, was and is, for the "coming of God's kingdom," "Thy kingdom come." This puts in words, brief and terse, mankind's most earnest prayer. Even the wicked, weary with the hard ways of sin, must long, at times, for the reign of justice on earth.

Now it stands to reason, if there is a God at all, He must be supreme, absolute, infinite, sovereign King and Lord—the fount of all authority. We discern in Him, whom we call our heavenly Father, all this. We see in Him a royal or kingly aspect, as the being who made, sustains, rules, and uses all for His great purposes and feel that He has rights and claims to our unconditional submission; and that His will must be our law. Hence, the heart, feeling instinctively the need of guidance and authority, and trusting to His justice and goodness, reverently adds to the hallowing of His Name an earnest cry that He may become our ruler, and that His divine will may give shape and tone to our lives. "Thy kingdom come, thy will be done." Liberty does not exclude but, by its very nature, demands authority; "a *kingdom,*" a rule of some sort, to direct its use and hold it within due limits. Order is a prime necessity of life. Life were intolerable without it. Sin and hell are but forms of disorder. Even the wildest upholder of unlicensed freedom in thought, speech and conduct tries to reduce his extravagance to a system, *i. e.,* to bring order out of disorder. We all need a master. We crave for "the kingdom." Revolt against human authority, the keen sense of injustice lashing men into anarchy and mutiny, is often but a form of prayer that God's ideal kingdom may come and replace what they deem misrule on earth. And yet the kingdom of God has come and "dwells amongst us." "Lo the kingdom of God is within you." "Repent, for the kingdom of God is at hand," said the precursor. God is waiting for willing subjects.

At the outset these expressions may seem to imply that God is not master in His own house; that there is a region, a sphere, to which His supreme dominion does not extend; that He has lost control, or can not keep in order His own creatures. But no! These words merely mean that free creatures who will not accept His

rule of mercy, pardon and grace will fall under the sway of His justice. He desires free service, but does not, and can not, compatibly with His nature, renounce His dominion. Everything, even sin and the region of supreme disorder, hell, come within the sweep of His law, His purpose and His power. If we do not obey willingly in one realm of God's dominions, we must suffer unwillingly in another. "O Lord, almighty King, all things are in thy power" (Esth. xiii, 9). From the tiniest mote that dances in the sunbeam, to the remotest star, from invisible forms of life in the depths of the sea, to the most dazzling angels in the highest heavens, all come within the scope and range and object and rule of almighty God. All in some sense are within His kingdom. To help us to grasp this thought better, divines are wont to distinguish a triple aspect of the kingdom of God, *viz.*, the kingdom of Nature, of grace and of glory.

In Nature we see the most striking display of the power, the wisdom and the dominion of God. Like a robe, or vesture, it both veils and reveals its Master. To the devout and pure of heart, God's kingdom of Nature, now especially that its secrets are so much better known, is a mirror reflecting the infinite power, mind and rule of the almighty Father. The reign of law is universal, interpenetrating, regulating its every atom, holding fast and explaining all its ever-varying phases, and is the secret of its beauty, its terrors, its sublimity and its charms. If a man can not see behind Nature a will, intelligence, purpose, might, and, above all, irresistible dominion, "reaching from end to end mightily and disposing all things sweetly," then he is blind indeed. A watch, a bicycle, an old ruin even, reveal mind, will and power, but a universe of wonders does not! Can unreason go farther?

In God's kingdom of Nature, His reign by law, the expression of His will, is so farreaching and complete, the sequence of cause and effect, the adjustment of the great complex forces at work in it so perfect, so delicate, and so admirable, as to be a never-failing spring of wonder and delight to those who make a study of it. The whole circle of the physical sciences is but a statement, as far as men can find out, of the order, the laws that prevail in the kingdom of God, called Nature. So interwoven, perfect and harmonious is this order, and the laws forming it, that many think God either *can* not or *will* not interfere with it by miracle or response to prayer. But miracles and prayer are part of a higher order. God does not,

nor can He, abdicate His regal prerogatives as supreme ruler and controller of the world He made. He is not in bondage to His own laws, or order, or cosmos, call it what you will. He is immanent in Nature, but distinct from and independent of it. Prayer is as much a force in the world of mind as attraction is in the realm of Nature. We ourselves are part of God's kingdom of Nature. A well-regulated body is a beautiful piece of divine mechanism, so is a well-balanced mind in tune with beautiful Nature around, and when we say, "Thy kingdom come," let us humbly and earnestly beg of God that greatest of gifts in His realm of Nature, "a sound mind in a sound body."

But what we mainly pray for, and what was obviously present to the mind of Christ, is that God may reign or plant His kingdom of righteousness in our hearts. This leads us into the realm of the supernatural, where God rules free souls, *singly,* by grace; *collectively,* in and through His Church. In the natural order or kingdom of Nature He rules by necessary and irresistible laws; in the moral and supernatural, or kingdom of grace, by laws binding on conscience, it is true, but which may be freely observed or transgressed. It is a kingdom wherein He has "left us in the hands of our own counsel," where "our wills are *ours* to make them His." It is a realm wherein we may, within certain limits, elect or reject Him as King. Hence, the soul of man is the only province, within the wide domain of God, in which disorder or misrule, in the true sense of the term, reigns. It is only from a free spirit that sin, supreme disorder, emanates. No doubt God overrules it and brings it within the range or sweep of His dominion and purpose; still it is disorder withal. Now to establish the kingdom of God in our hearts we must make a whole-hearted surrender of our entire being to Him, so that His law may rule and guide our bodies with their senses and our souls with their powers. That God may be enthroned in our hearts is what we pray for in saying, "Thy kingdom come."

Self, in the form of passion, interest, worldliness, is ever striving to set up a rival kingdom. Now one alone can fill, and rightly rule, the heart of man—almighty God, for whom those hearts were made. A heart void of God is void, too, of happiness. But remember that in the nature of things God is, and must be, supreme. He neither can, nor will, share His throne or rights with another. Let us, therefore, for it is of supreme importance, ask ourselves is He king

within us? "Have we lifted up our gates to let in the Lord of glory?" We unconsciously mock God, if, while praying for the coming of His kingdom we do not seriously mean to withdraw our allegiance from the devil and subject our minds and affections to God. Whom do we fear most? What "law has dominion over us?" Whose sons are we? Are we children of "the kingdom or of Belial?" Bear in mind that, "Whosoever are led by the spirit of God, they are the sons of God." When St. Paul felt the kingdom of God, *i. e.*, the grace of God, stirring within him, he could say in all truth and candor, "I live, now not I, but Christ liveth in me." Can we?

But not merely does God reign in each singly He reigns over all as a body in His visible kingdom, the Church. Men are not scattered and isolated units. Even in the kingdom of Nature mankind forms one class—so in grace God would have them gathered into one great family—His kingdom, without end. This kingdom of His is not a mere abstraction—it is no mere generalization of His secret reign by grace in men's hearts. It is no mere ideal kingdom, a reflection or mirage of Christ's reign of justice on earth or in heaven. It is not an echo of the millennium, but a real, concrete, visible, empire—a united brotherhood of men and women, bound in union under one head, one faith, one sacrifice. The Church is the house of God, built on the unperishable rock of Peter, into which all men and nations are invited, nay, commanded, to enter: "Her foundations are on the Holy Hills. He loveth the gates of Sion above all the tabernacles of Jacob. Glorious things are spoken of thee, thou City of God. "Pray, then, for the peace of Jerusalem," the Church. Her advent and extension to-day are the world's great need, its supreme want. Morally and spiritually the world is "sick unto death," and needs healing. The Church is Christ bodily present among us. Her voice is an echo of His. Her hand is His, to bless, and heal, and save. The world's essential interests, its peace and happiness, are involved in her welfare. Pray, then, for her triumph, for her head, her episcopate, her valiant missionaries in all lands. Widen your hearts. Her limits are the earth's bounds. Be not narrow and parochial, but worldwide, like "the kingdom." Love her with a holy patriotism, for she is our and God's kingdom. "If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning."

Furthermore, "there is a land of pure delights," the kingdom of

glory, wherein God reigns among the saints in undisputed sovereignty. It is the full outgrowth and last consummation of His kingdom of Nature and grace. The Church militant, His visible kingdom here, is fighting her way to that of glory. Earth is the training ground for heaven. We are in a state of unrest and combat in God's kingdom on earth; we hope to reach peace and victory above. When we pray that God's "kingdom may come," we cast longing looks to our home with God beyond the grave. But if we would reign with Christ and His saints in the kingdom of glory we must first be true members of His kingdom of grace. We reap what we sow in Nature and in grace. None reach heaven in whom the seed of glory has not first been planted by and in grace. This we shall understand more fully in our next point.

II. In God's kingdom His will is law. In all communities the will of the ruler, whether one man or a body of men, molds the conduct of their subjects, as far as the power entrusted to them goes. To rule is to express one's will in law. Hence the will of God is the supreme standard of life and conduct to all creatures, a thought expressed in the third petition of the Lord's Prayer, "Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven." It is the necessary corollary of the other two. If God is our Father in heaven, holy, just and kind, if we pray for the exaltation of His Name and the coming of His kingdom, we must surely wish the law of that kingdom, in other words, the will of God, to be done, carried out in all details, as is the case in heaven.

In its fulness and perfection, this petition is not a mere cry of helpless resignation to a supreme power holding all in His grasp—nor a mere stoic indifference to the inevitable—nor the cry of a stricken heart seeking refuge and consolation in a will higher and stronger than its own; but, rather, the joyous prayer of a true child, trusting and loving a father's goodness and power and willingness to help. No doubt it suits all persons and all moods; and should be uttered by all the children of God, whether in joy or sorrow, when under reward or under punishment. If we accept it not as our law of life, even though it involves suffering, unquestioning submission, inequality and hardship, then we are walking in the shadow of death. The whole practical wisdom of life, to say nothing of the hope of a better, lies in realizing this prayer. Whatever standard of life and conduct may be put before men and nations, whatever ideal they may be taught to aim at, whatever

progress they may make in arts, science, education, wealth, comfort, or the rest if they are not doing the will of God, they are perishing, as Greece and Rome perished. Whatever results we strive for the issue must be conditioned on God's willing it.

The Lord's Prayer is the heart and pith of the Gospel, and the third petition is the soul of this great prayer. Happily we may be sure it is God's will to grant all that is good for us. "If a son ask his father for a loaf, will he hand him a stone, or for a fish, will he give him a scorpion?" "Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven," contains therefore, both a prayer and a creed. It is believing God and asking Him a father's help. Now, God's will is more concerned about our imperishable souls than about our perishable bodies. It deals with both aspects of man, it is true, but mainly our soul. Hence we find God's will and message brought by Christ in these words: "This is the will of God, your sanctification." His word to nations and individuals alike is not one of wealth, prosperity, art, or learning, but simply of goodness—rising to holiness. It is not mere natural morality, not merely justice, temperance, fortitude and other mere human virtues—they are good and necessary in their way—but something higher still, something that becomes the house of God, the kingdom of His on earth, the Church, on her way to His kingdom of glory in heaven, and this is "the sanctification of his elect," in other words, their holiness. Holiness is the law of His kingdom, and a gift we ask, both for ourselves and for others, when we say, "Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven."

It may be objected that the will of the supreme Being is irresistible, and *must* be done, thwart it as men may. True, in one sense, for even sinners, acting against the express will of heaven, are contributing involuntarily to the carrying out of His purposes; but He permits evil. He neither wills nor approves of it. Rulers often *tolerate* what they condemn. God neither created evil nor can He wish it. Even good men loathe sin, how much more the all-holy God. If we are plastic and yield our wills obedient to His, He molds us, as St. Paul phrases it, into "vessels of honor"; if not, we are still in the potter's hands, to be shaped into vessels of dishonor. The gardener wishes all his trees to bear fruit; but if, notwithstanding his supplying them with soil, heat and moisture, they go all into wood and leaves, they eventually find their way into the fire or the rubbish heap. If we refuse to fall into line with Him in His kingdom of righteousness, as Father and Saviour, we

shall have to do so under Him as judge and destroyer in the kingdom of darkness. Sun, air and water are engines both of life and death in his kingdom of Nature; and so is it in His realm of grace.

As I said, perfection, holiness of life, is the law of His kingdom. It is God's will in our regard. Indeed, we may say that God wills the *best* in every department of existence. The perception and love of this *best* is the ideal. It is a glimpse, so to say, of the divine ideas, as the model and measure of things. Even nature, hedged in with limitations and struggling against all manner of enemies, tries to realize her best. An Alpine flower is not only beautiful, but perfect, in its kind. Evolution is a struggle of God's creatures toward the divine exemplar, *the best*. It is God's will throughout all His kingdom. "Be ye perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect." "Bene omnia fecit," Our Lord "did all things well." Now we all share one capacity in common, one possibility that we may develop indefinitely, and that is, moral capacity. We can all be holy, we can all lead good, nay, holy, lives. We can not all be strong, learned, famous; but there is nothing to hinder us from being holy. We can all do the will of God; and "this is the will of God your sanctification," *i. e.*, your holiness. This is the realization of the divine ideal, the divine Will, in our regard. Grace to be holy is what we chiefly pray for when we say, "Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven."

Coming down to details, our holiness is effected by doing the will of God, as summed up for the guidance of all mankind in the ten commandments—often called the *law*. They are written on the heart, *i. e.*, traced on the reason and conscience of all men. They are involved in Christ's great law of love—the love of God above all things and our neighbor as ourselves. Duty is the test of love, and duty is the doing of God's will by the keeping of His law. "He that hath (*i. e.*, knoweth) my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loves me." The degree of perfection with which they are kept is the measure of our holiness. God's will in law is of wide extent and application. We find it in the laws of the Church, God's kingdom on earth, in the law of the land we live in, in the voice of parents, teachers, masters—all claiming our obedience within their respective spheres, and rightly so, as all just authority comes from God. "There is no power but from God."

In the third position of the Lord's Prayer we beg Him to give us grace to be resigned to His holy will in the trials, losses, disap-

pointments and other sufferings of life. He permits them for our correction, or chastisement, and to wean us from what may prove an injurious or dangerous attachment to this world—a halting place, not our home. Remember, that all the crosses we meet with aid us to acquire that degree of holiness it is God's will we should reach, and without which we can never arrive at His kingdom above. None but saints, *i. e.,* holy people, ever cross the portals of heaven. Even prayer, one of the main reservoirs of grace, can not make us holy. It must prove its worth in deeds. "Not every one that saith to me, Lord, Lord, can enter into the kingdom of heaven, but he that doeth the will of my Father who is in heaven."

Our Lord often sends His hearers to Nature for lessons in divine wisdom; "Behold the birds of the air, they sow not, neither do they reap, yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Behold the lilies of the field." One lesson they all teach us—obedience and resignation to God"s will. All carry out perfectly that Will in the laws made for their guidance. The planets never swerve by a hair's breadth from the line of their orbits. Every particle of matter complies with the law of attraction, and as we rise higher in God's kingdom of Nature, bird, and beast, and flower, and insect, yield ready and willing submission to the laws framed to make them perfect in their kind. Hence the entrancing harmony and order and rhythm of Nature, making it a hymn of praise to God. Why should man—Godlike man, rejoicing in liberty—the lord and ruler of Nature, refuse his tribute of free submission to his Creator? Why should he refuse, nay, often blasphemously glory in refusing, to do God's will? Say not we have not strength to do it; as well say we have no air to breathe, or water to drink, or light to see with. God's grace is free and abundant. Our Christian atmosphere is charged with it. It is ever at hand, and may be had for the asking.

Let us, then, ever pray almighty God to keep us always within His kingdom, and grant us grace to keep the laws of that kingdom —in other words, do His holy will. Beg of Him thus to answer our prayer when we say, "Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven."

# XXXIX. THE LORD'S PRAYER

BY THE REV. WILLIAM GRAHAM

## III

"Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us."

*SYNOPSIS.—Introduction.—The division of the petitions in the Lord's Prayer. God's glory and our needs. The fourth and fifth petitions—our need of sustenance and pardon.*

*I. God the giver of all good things. We utter our prayer in the plural—for all men. We ask for daily bread—confidence in His continual care. Not a prayer for the dishonest or the lazy. Luxuries not included, but only what is necessary for rational and simple life. Ask food for soul—the grace of God—the Sacraments, especially the Blessed Eucharist—religious truth.*

*II. The greater need of pardon for sin. How debts pile up and press on us. Our debts to God. The fact that all need pardon for sin, even though they profess not to. God's goodness in forgiving sin—not the usual way of nature. The hope and comfort it gives. The conditions of forgiveness. Prayer for others. The absolute need of forgiving others.*

*Introduction.*—The opening petitions of the Lord's Prayer deal, firstly, with the glory of God; secondly, with the sum of His works distributed into kingdoms; and, thirdly, the doing of His will therein by obedience to His law. From these lofty themes and high aims of prayer, aims that should be uppermost in our thoughts and desires, Our Lord teaches us to descend to a lower level, and crave God to satisfy our own personal wants. Love of God, zeal for His glory, and deep interest in His kingdom, inasmuch as they raise mind and heart above the narrow, petty, selfish concerns of life, do not exclude, but, on the contrary, regulate and purify the love of self. "Charity," truly, "begins at home." "He is a wise man who is wise to his own soul." And, after all, our own hearts are the main corner of ground that the Master has given us to till in His vineyard, the Church. "What will it profit a man to gain the whole world," even to praise God, "if he loses his own soul." However, a man who is truly God-centered, need not fear being unduly or dangerously self-centered. Following the order of the "Our Father," "let us ever seek first the kingdom of God and his glory," and then

we may be sure "that all else will be added unto us." Indeed, the first great need of the soul made for God is God. He alone can fill the heart, as experience proves. The first three petitions, if granted, sate the soul, "hungry and athirst for the living God."

In our discourse to-day we shall briefly touch upon the fourth and fifth petitions, which have to do with our nearer, lower and more personal wants, "Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive them that trespass against us."

Food for body and soul and free pardon, or wiping out our debt of sin, are the immediate and crying needs of every child of Adam. A bad harvest all over the world spells ruin; but if the loving action in providence of God, the first cause, ceased for a single moment, all creation would be blotted out. We thus, in a most real sense, depend upon Him for our daily bread; and as, in addition, we are born and live in sin, we are ever in a state of spiritual penury, and keep sinking still more deeply into debt; every day we need a daily discharge from these debts, in the forgiveness of our sins.

I. In the fourth petition we go straight to our Father in heaven and beg daily provision for the maintenance of soul and body. He is "the giver of every good and perfect gift," from whom, either directly or indirectly all things come. Not a flower perishes that was not decked and painted by Him; not a sparrow falls to the ground without His knowledge. Though countless secondary causes intervene, yet does our daily food come as straight from His bounty, as if it fell from the skies ready to eat, like the manna that fell every day in the desert. "The sun goes forth daily at his command" to ripen and otherwise prepare food for His children. "He maketh his rain to fall and his sun to shine on just and unjust alike," for all are His children, even though ungrateful.

We beg of God to give us *our* daily bread, for two reasons; first, to be reminded that we are to pray, not selfishly and exclusively for ourselves alone, but for all our fellow-men, brothers and sisters in God; and, next, that we should make the bread that God sends us *ours* by honest toil or labor, either of head or hand, brain or muscle.

We pray Him first, to give *us,* not *me,* but all men, enough food for our daily wants. He who feeds the birds and clothes, nay, decks the lilies, will, in due season, provide for all the reasonable wants of those who alone of earth's inhabitants can consciously know, love and serve Him. He will not certainly gratify, though

He may permit, greed, selfishness and extravagance. The words *daily* and *this day* remind us that God, like every good father and mother, whose instinctive love and care of their offspring come from Him, takes care of His children from day to day; and that we, on our side, should not be unduly solicitous about the morrow or the future, but trust almighty God, who both *can* and *will* supply our daily needs. He evidently means this prayer to be said every day, to remind us of our daily, *i. e.,* life-long, dependence on Him.

So much for the broad meaning of this petition; but we must not interpret it to justify sloth, carelessness or indifference. Wealth, abundance is the reward of labor. We are given powers of mind and body wherewith to acquire God's gifts of food and clothing. Earth, sea and sky teem with "our daily bread," but we must seek it and work for it. Nature's granaries, another word for God's storehouses, open only to labor. The very birds and beasts He feeds every day have to seek and labor for their food. In Scripture God both rebukes and condemns those who eat the bread of idleness, or waste their substance in riotous living. We can not call it *our* bread unless we honestly make it *ours* by doing our duty, *i. e.,* our life's work of body or mind, brain or brawn. Therefore, let no thief, rogue, idler, gambler or dishonest tradesman, ask God for his daily bread, as he already receives his wages from the devil. The man who in some honest way or other is not earning his daily bread, while he can, may be said, in a manner, to steal it. They who eat the bread of idleness or roguery, when it is their duty to work, should pray rather to Mercury, the god of thieves, than to "Our Father in heaven," "who loveth justice, and hateth iniquity."

Bread, the staff of life, usually means the necessaries of existence. In the Lord's Prayer it certainly excludes luxuries, and may be said to cover a decent maintenance, conformable to one's state or position. What would be deemed necessities in one age or country might be looked on as luxuries in another. Extreme wealth and dire poverty, now so common, are both states dangerous to the soul's higher life, and never meant, only permitted, by God. They are artificial, the result of man's unfair distribution of God's goods. As what is called the simple life—the life, say, led by most monks and nuns—a life limited to modest, essential and current needs, is best both for soul and body, we can not fairly ask God for more. We can not claim from the best of fathers in the way of food and drink anything beyond what is needful and wholesome; nor can we

expect more from almighty God in answer to prayer. Reason, not desire or appetite, is the judge of the body's needs. Remember it is the soul's servant, not its master, and must be kept in its place. Hard work, absence of delicacies and all superfluities, are the secret of its health and well-being. The necessaries of bodily life cost little; it is the luxuries that both cost and kill. Wealth, idleness, greed, self-indulgence, and over-solicitude for the morrow, are in direct opposition to the spirit of the petition, "Give us this day our daily bread." The folk who have really caught the spirit and philosophy of the Lord's Prayer are the religious of both sexes, "who have left all to follow Our Lord"; and who, "though having nothing, yet possess all things," reaping by *duty,* and *work,* in their modest lives, "a hundredfold in this life," with every likelihood of "eternal glory in the next." How sad to see so many fret and worry themselves to death over needless and excessive fears for to-morrow; but sadder still to see people whom God has blessed with plenty interested only in "the bread that perishes," and in old age, "with one foot in the grave," still slaves to the unholy mammon of iniquity.

But in praying for our daily bread we must bear in mind that we crave also the food of our souls. The body is only one, and that a perishable part of our being. The soul is the true self—our true life; and it, too, in a spiritual sense, needs food and drink to keep alive and in health. "My meat," *i. e.,* "the very food of my soul, is to do the will of him who sent me." Spirits are said to live on truth and such like spiritual food. But our soul's first need in the way of food is the grace of God. The body's first need is air. Night and day it must breathe or perish, and hence God feeds it with life-giving oxygen all through life, night and day, in sickness and in health. Now the grace of God is the very breath of the soul—nay, its life. On our lips, then, "Give us this day our daily bread," means bestow on our souls the grace necessary to keep them alive and pleasing to God. We ask to drink of the waters of the holy spirit springing up "from the Saviour's fountains" into eternal life.

Such is His divine interest in our soul's life and welfare that He has furnished this all-needful grace under the forms and symbols of material food and drink. We pray that "the bread of the strong, and the wine bringing forth virgins, may never fail, nor the Saviour's sacramental fountains ever run dry in God's house"—the

Church—the new Bethlehem—house of bread. Pray that you may be ever within reach of that wondrous bread, come down from heaven, of which the manna that fell miraculously in the desert was but a shadow and an emblem—the bread left to His Church by Him who said, "I am the living bread," "He that eateth this bread shall live forever."

Our souls, too, as I said, are fed on truth. The mind and heart yearn to know "the truth of God." This truth is assimilated in prayer, reflection, reading the Word of God. Good books are food to the mind. Indeed, knowledge of all God's works and ways strengthens and braces up the soul, as good food and medicine the body. And just as we may poison the body with bad food, so may we ruin our soul's health, or even destroy spiritual life within us by feeding on the moral poison and garbage of bad books and papers. Against all this we must guard ourselves by using good mental food, such as that furnished by God's word or guaranteed by His Church, which may sustain and uphold the life of our souls in the desert of this world.

II. But there is a greater and more crying need than that of even bread for our hungry souls, and bodies, and that is the pardon of sin, the lifting up by God from the burdened conscience its pressing weight of guilt. This ineffable boon we crave from God in the fifth petition of the Lord's Prayer, "Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us." The petition for bread, the great need of the body, and for pardon of sin, the still deeper want of the soul, are thus uttered in almost the same breath, "Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our trespasses," *i. e.*, in modern form, our offenses, our debts, our sins, in short. The debts that men pile up even daily in the books of conscience, the very just in our eyes are afraid to face on the day of reckoning, "Cum vix justus sit securus." In this world there is nothing so hard to forget and forgive as debt. Debts are easy to contract, we hardly know we are incurring them, but settlement day comes round, and the bill comes in. Time after time those debts with accrued interest bring weariness to the heart. If one, by prayer and entreaty could only cancel them, but no! The world, even when just, is hard. Accounts are duly sent in, and must be met. The dread of debt and ever-pressing creditors is one of the strongest restraints on extravagance or fast living.

But do we ever reflect that we are all saints and sinners alike

hopelessly sunk in debt to almighty God; and what is worse, hopelessly insolvent as well; for the debt or sin, or trespass, as it is called, howsoever small, is measured by the infinity of the creditor, almighty God. We are daily contracting debt in God's books from the day we come to the use of reason, when the sense of responsibility first dawns on our souls. Both reason and conscience tell us of God's rights to a life-long service that we render either very imperfectly or not at all. We owe to God, *e. g.,* all the good of which we are capable by a good and worthy use of the powers of mind and body. Again, we are called, and we intimately feel we are called, to live up to the best that is in us; whereas most of us live down to our worst, if we do not sink below the level of the beast. What we owe in the way of duty to God, our neighbor and ourselves, and yet omit. What we ought to *be* and *do* in thought, word, deed, and *are* not, and *do* not—the good we leave undone, and, above all, the evil that we commit—the many gross sins we fall into and remember; as well as the far greater number, perhaps, hidden and forgotten in the folds of memory—all these accumulate a pile of debts, a weight of trespasses that may well appall even the most hardened.

I know, indeed, there are souls who boast they have nothing to fear from sin—who regard, or fancy they regard, the dread of it as a remnant of superstitious awe; and others, in whom the moral sense, the feeling of self-contempt and defilement, usually awakened by a dereliction of duty, seems dead or dormant; but all this does not touch the reality of our debt of sin, any more than the loss of consciousness or memory in disease affects the reality of the disease. Debt is debt, and sin is sin, whether we forget, or pretend to forget or deny, that we are under it. The Holy Ghost is ever convincing the world of sin, judgment and justice in conscience and otherwise; even though the world protests loudly, it neither knows, or owes anything to almighty God. He has solemnly declared He will not be mocked and will demand from each and all an account of their stewardship down to the last farthing. Sin, in other words, debt, to the awful holiness of God, is the greatest and dreadest real evil in the world. Not merely habitual sinners, but saints have wept and trembled at the thought of their sins. And with good reason when we seriously reflect on the nature and attributes of the Being who is offended even by the smallest sin. The fifth petition of the Lord's Prayer intimates daily matter of divine pardon in all. "In

many things we all offend"; and as well say, we do not need washing every day to keep clean, as to say that we do not need daily ablution of soul. Dust penetrates the most closely guarded mechanism, and so does sin in some small way enter the most jealously watched heart. "If we say we have no sin we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us."

There is no greater display of the infinite mercy of God than that taught in the fifth petition, wherein we are invited to approach the almighty Creator of heaven and earth; and with the same sense and confidence as we ask for our daily bread, crave likewise the forgiveness of our sins. The forgiveness of sins is the most consoling truth in the creed, the highest exercise of power in Christ's kingdom, the Church. "Who can forgive sin but God alone?" Yet He grants this favor daily in answer to the Lord's Prayer, and through the ministry of His priests. Now, just think what it means. In no other realm of God's kingdom is such a thing known. The angels sinned—acted against the known high will of their Creator, and were cast out from heaven. In the kingdom of Nature the transgression of a law is followed by swift and irremediable chastisement, be the transgressor a hoary sinner, or a sweet and innocent babe. If we swallow poison, are struck by lightning, or fall into the fire, our doom is sealed. Errors, forgetfulness, absence of all moral guilt, will not hinder the effect that follows the transgression of a law of nature. Open your doors to infection, stop the entry of food into the body, or of air into your lungs and death follows. You have broken a law in God's kingdom of Nature; and you reap what you have sown—death or illness.

But the mercy of God is above all His works, or rather, in the person of the God-man, justice and mercy have met and embraced. The sinner who breaks and disturbs moral order, infinitely more important than physical, receives free grace and pardon. Though the laws of God's spiritual kingdom are broken, yet, wonder of wonders, "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all iniquity" (I John i, 9). "Far as the East is from the West, so far he removes our transgressions from Him." "He blots them out as a cloud." Nay, in the language of hyperbole, "Our sins and iniquities he remembers no more for ever." Who, then, can or will despair or sink deeper and deeper in the miry depths of a coarse and sin-hardened mind and heart when he can truthfully "Arise, and go to his father." Can we ever

sufficiently thank almighty God for the privilege of belonging to His kingdom on earth, wherein Christ has left His own divine power of the forgiveness of sin, "Whose sins ye shall forgive they are forgiven, whose sins ye shall retain they are retained." We belong to the nation of which it was foretold, "The people that dwell therein shall have their iniquity taken away from them" (Is. xxxiii, 24), and among whom "there shall be a fountain open to Jerusalem for the washing of the sinner and the unclean" (Zach. i, 13).

The forgiveness of sins, as you are, of course, aware, implies on the part of almighty God the grace of true sorrow or contrition, in answer to the sinner's prayer for forgiveness, without which sincere grief pardon is impossible. As long as we are impenitent, *i. e.,* attached to sin, and not prepared to make the necessary sacrifice for renouncing it, we can not be forgiven. It is impossible to be turned to and away from God at the same time, to be loved as repentant and loathed as impenitent. We can not worship Jehovah and Baal, God and Mammon. In addition to this sorrow, we must adopt the means appointed in God's Church for the judicial pardon of sin—a humble avowal of our sins, and compliance with the conditions required by those to whom Christ has said, "Whose sins you shall forgive," etc., *viz.,* the ministers of the Church in the tribunal of Confession.

And while praying for the forgiveness of our own sins, we should pray for other poor sinners likewise. The one common ground on which we stand, the one common need that joins us, is that we are all, as St. Peter confessed, "sinful men"; and while persisting obstinately in that state we should rather pray God to "depart from us," than to forgive us. It is the will of God that "sinners should be converted and live"; and we may be sure that no work of charity is more pleasing to almighty God than that of earnest prayer for helpless sinners.

It is worthy of note that a condition is attached to our petition for the forgiveness of sins, indispensable to obtaining it, and that is full, free and generous pardon of those who have offended us, "Forgive and you shall be forgiven." "If you will not forgive men, neither will your heavenly Father forgive you." "When you shall stand to pray, forgive, if you have anything against any man; that your father also, who is in heaven, may forgive you your sins" (Mark xi, 25). No condition for salvation is more strictly enforced

and more profusely illustrated by parable and maxims than this. An unforgiving spirit brought with us to prayer, or altar, bars all free pardon on the part of almighty God. How can we indeed kneel down before an offended God to ask the pardon we deny to others less guilty, it may be, than ourselves? No doubt it is hard to flesh and blood; for our enemy, or, rather, our brother, because all men are brethren, may be wicked, cruel and unjust; yet both reason and faith combine in showing how much more unjust and irrational it is to let anger and hatred rankle in the heart especially at the moment when we are asking a similar favor for ourselves from almighty God.

We have now but too briefly touched on the petition of the Our Father, wherein we crave for our two foremost and most pressing needs—bread for body and soul; and, next, the forgiveness of our sins. We can not live a true, full, holy life without both. In repeating the Lord's Prayer, therefore, let me exhort you to suck the honeycomb of these petitions to their fullest. Let us not be content, as so many are, when God feeds and clothes our bodies, as He does the beasts and birds; and lets the poor soul go empty and hungry away. Let us pray, also, for the bread that perishes not, and the water gushing forth to eternal life. And to profit by this double bread and life-giving water we must, when "we bring our gift of prayer to the altar, go and be reconciled to our brother," should we have aught against him. Then only can we say, hopefully and with profit, to our souls, "Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive them that trespass against us."

## XL. THE LORD'S PRAYER

BY THE REV. WILLIAM GRAHAM

### IV

"Lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil."

*SYNOPSIS.—Introduction.—The sixth petition a continuation of the fifth.*

*I. God tempteth no man. All God's creation good, but world a place of trial, and we abuse God's gifts. Temptation only trial—sin lies in consent of the will. Temptation a help in forming character. The petition is for God to lessen temptation or grant grace. Some persons made better by temptation; others should flee. The evil within—the Fall, animal passions, evil thoughts. From without—the influences of environment, worldliness, states in life and justification of God's goodness. We are tried for our ultimate good. We have the help of prayer, occupation, flight.*

*II. Some thoughts on the negative character of evil. Evil not God's doing. He often turns it to good. Our duty to pray against its spread.*

*Introduction.*—We now come to the last two petitions of the Lord's Prayer, "Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil," the drift of which twin entreaty is to beg God's help against present and future evils. Praying for bread, we ask only enough for the day; but there is no limit or qualification of any sort attached to our petition against evil. This request immediately follows the one that craves the forgiveness of sins and urgently begs God to save us from relapse. Indeed, anxiety about future falls and a firm determination not to sin again are an essential part of true regret, genuine sorrow for the past. We all sincerely desire deliverance in future from any evil in the past that we truly grieve for. Hence, a firm purpose of amendment is an essential requisite of the act of contrition made in Confession. But in the Lord's Prayer we ask to be saved from every form of evil, more especially from sin, the worst form of all.

I. The expression, "Lead us not into temptation," does not imply, though verbally it seems to suggest, that God either could or would lay snares to draw His poor creatures astray. Such action would be flatly opposed, in direct contradiction, to His divine attributes of holiness and love. "God tempteth no man," says St.

James. Rather, He commands them to fly from sin and temptation to sin, "as from the face of a serpent." God, no doubt, for our own benefit and His own wise and holy purpose, leads us into a life bristling with temptation; but it is our abuse of His fair gifts that makes it so. God made all things after their kind, "true, good and beautiful." It is we, with our evil eye, our sinful minds, that have put the soul of evil into God's lovely world, and the fair creatures that people it. There is a divine element in gold and grape and beauty. Is it God's fault that our earth is hideous with greed and lust and drunkenness? By the very nature of life and things, He does and must lead or bring us into contact with the realm of Nature of which, indeed, we form part; but if, instead of using, we abuse, the good things of God's kingdom, it is not because He puts us there, but because we are selfish, weak-willed, and evilly disposed. When we beg of God "not to lead us into temptation," we pray that we may not fall into sin in consequence of the temptations of which the world is necessarily full; and that the contact of our free will with His free and plenteous gifts may not be turned by us into an occasion of self-degradation and offence to Him.

The better to understand the force of this petition, it may be said, broadly speaking, that temptation means only trial. It is not evil in itself, it is only a test or trial of goodness. Now, our brief span of life on earth is but a preparation for a better, a training period for a higher. If so, and no Christian doubts it, how can we expect to be chosen, trained, fitted for another world without test or trial—in other words, without temptation? Temptation is necessary to try one's moral or spiritual worth. It plays a great, an all-important part in the perfecting of good character, *i. e.*, in the training of the saints. Mutual intercourse often creates temptations, and is yet a condition of holiness. The best and holiest souls, men and women, may be a cause of temptation to some, and yet sources of virtue to others. It is yielding to temptation, not meeting it, that results in evil. It is not the knowledge of evil, nor the suggestion of it, springing up in the mind that is wrong, but the consent of the will. The only source of evil, the only power of man, capable of turning temptation into sin is the will, free and responsible. The battle of life, or spiritual combat, as we call it, the conflict of the grace-aided will with the suggestions of evil springing from temptation, in all its glittering and seductive forms, far from uprooting, does, under God, but strengthen and deepen the love of goodness in the heart.

The attraction of the sun on the one hand, and the tendency to fly off into space on the other, keep the earth steady in her path or orbit; so with the soul and temptation. It has a poising or balancing effect on character. It acts like a downward force in matter. Though it pulls the soul to earth, yet the soul could not mount heavenward without it. Like the tail of the kite, and the string wherewith it is held, though they draw it to the ground, it is true, still the kite could neither rise nor keep steady without them. So with temptation, through the very fact of reminding us how carnal and earthly minded we are it keeps us sober and steady and watchful. "What doth he know who has not been tempted?"

When we say, therefore, "Lead us not into temptation," we pray almighty God, who controls all forces, overrules and makes even evil contributory to the advance of good, to hold in check the power of temptations over us, or give us additional strength to overcome them. In the suggestive words of St. Paul, we beg Him, "Not to suffer us to be tempted above that which we are able," but "to make with the temptation issue that we may be able to bear it" (I Cor. x, 13). Herein we implicitly ask God for the help of that secret, potent force, weapon, medicine called *"divine grace,"* never refused to sincere and humble prayer; and which in some mysterious way makes us trust God, distrust self, fly danger, exercise self-restraint, and to concentrate all our powers that we may overcome temptation on its evil side.

In this respect God does not will, but permits temptation. As in the case of scandal, "it must be that scandals come; but wo to those by whom they come." In like manner temptation must come; but wo to the tempter. God allows, and even makes use of temptations, to brace up and strengthen us spiritually. It is only by a process of temptation that we can reach spiritual manhood. People grow much stronger in a comparatively cold and trying climate than in one that is soft and relaxing. For weak and delicate constitutions, however, frost and snow and cold have their dangers; and so has temptation, to certain enervated souls. Flight to a better moral climate is frequently their only safeguard. For them, and, indeed, we may say for all, prayer is an anchor of hope. To it must all cling in the lifelong struggle "against principalities and powers," the powers of wickedness in high places.

As I already said, the real seat of temptation and its main danger lies in ourselves, not in the objects that cause them. Food and

drink and company and occupation may be sources of temptation to some, and yet "daily bread" and an occasion of gratitude and sacred love to others. "Is your eye evil, because I am good?" We all carry a worm that corrodes and gnaws away the heart of things, good in themselves, and which gives them a tinge, an odor, a color, of evil. It is this diseased or ill-directed fancy of ours, this evil eye of our minds, that turns God's beautiful world into a land of snares, traps and ambushes. Thorns and brambles and prickly plants now grow where, without sin, we should find only the fruits of paradise. As was observed, however, we need never fear temptation as long as the consent of the will is withheld. If the will is turned to God the soul's fortress is safe. Suggestions and thoughts of evil, even the first movements of irrepressible passion, may be the fuel, but till deliberately kindled they remain only in the stage of temptation. Sin is the product of a perverse will. In that den of infamy alone is it bred and born. For souls like ourselves, wounded in the fall, temptations are always dangerous, and, therefore, we pray God to keep us from them, were they as near and dear to us as father or mother, wife or child. "If thy eye scandalize thee (that is, lead you into sin) pluck it out; if thy foot scandalize thee, cut it off." This is Our Lord's telling commentary on His own words, "Lead us not into temptation."

The temptations we here pray against spring from sources either within or outside ourselves. The human heart bears within a well of temptation in passion—"a heart prone to evil," from birth. Our whole animal nature, reverting to animal instincts and desires, as the evolutionists say, is in a state of chronic rebellion to reason, faith and conscience. The fall has thus weakened the higher powers of intelligence and free will, and proportionately strengthened the lower. Hence our leaning, nay our downward grovelling tendencies to earth and material cares and interests. In addition to, or, perhaps, in consequence of, this inherited predisposition to vice, bad habits, lack of education go to make up a fountain of evil, all the more dangerous, as we can not get away from its seat in self. From it often gush forth unbidden torrents of evil thoughts and suggestions, impulses of passion, various outbursts, in short, of the old Adam, that make us cry out in anguish, "Lord, save us, we perish." "Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil."

The soul of temptation, doubtless, is from within, but these interior tendencies to evil would seldom develop into sin if not stimu-

lated by temptation from without—so much so, indeed, that, in certain circles, man, be he saint or sinner, is believed to be simply the creature of his environment, which means that his character and habits are determined, molded, shaped by the forces and circumstances surrounding him, just as the fauna and flora, the plants and animals, are modified and determined to what they are by soil and climate. Of course, it is not true as, in the matter of temptation, to go no farther, we see the same outward influences producing diametrically opposite effects, without reckoning the power of grace on character, and ignoring, as it does, the supernatural element in life altogether; but, like all errors, it contains a partial truth. Temptation from without, in league with our own domestic enemy within, often exercises a baneful influence on our spiritual life. The world, the flesh and the devil, the external sources of temptation, are noxious enemies to spiritual growth. The world, not the God-made world, but the world of man, is opposed both in letter and spirit to the Gospel of our Master, Christ. Its ways, its maxims, its ideals, are contrary to His, for the reason that it looks no higher nor farther than itself. Its horizon is limited to the tangible and visible! It is based on the temporal. It ignores eternity. It lives for the day. It teaches us to eat, drink and be merry when we can, for to-morrow we may die. Its wisdom and morals lead men astray from their true end. God does not enter into its calculations. Its blind worship of wealth and respectability, its hatred, fear and contempt of poverty, its lax views of purity, the marriage vows, commercial honesty, the sentiments it expresses in its literature, press, theaters are all so many temptations that may well shake the firmest mind, if not aided by grace from on high. In fact, the world, as a source of temptation from without, is encased in an atmosphere injurious to spiritual health. It is permeated with germs that may bring ruin to souls. Moral infection and contagion are in the very breath of it.

Again, there are temptations and dangers peculiar to each one's state of life. The very duties that people undertake, their unwillingness or inability to face the self-sacrifice and labor which these duties impose, render them liable to sin, if they do not pray, and pray fervently, to God, for help and guidance. How lightly people enter the married state, how thoughtlessly they undertake new obligations, or change about from one mode of life to another, without ever casting a thought on God or their duties. Can we wonder,

then, that they find themselves entangled in a very network of evil! Sickness, health, success or failure in life all bring their trials and dangers, and show the need and duty we are under to pray to God, not to lead us into temptations, but give us strength to resist and overcome them.

And now it may be asked, why should God place us in a world where temptations are so rife. In regard to a Being supremely wise, just and powerful, all whose actions in reference to His creatures, are infinitely just and holy, we have no right to frame such a question. God's adorable will is a sufficient reason for all He does and permits. A good man, whose heart is filled with love, does the best he can for his children; the infinitely good God, our almighty Father, does what, in the end, is infinitely best; so let us trust Him.

Even shortsighted as we are, we see in the very nature of things the necessity and advantages of temptation or trial. Free will necessitates temptation. How can we be selected, chosen, judged, or rewarded, if not tried by temptation? The whole theory of evolution is but "the survival of the fittest," in a struggle with adversity, which fits in very well with "our wrestling, that is, not with flesh and blood, but with the powers of darkness in high places." God never meant us to loll away our lives in "a castle of indolence"; but, through many tribulations, "to fight our way to the kingdom of heaven." Life is the soul's training ground, and temptations serve to test our fitness to "spring up into eternal life." As well hope to turn out a scholar, a soldier, or an athlete without trial or training as to make a soul truly Christian and supernatural without temptation. Winter's snow and frost and rain are as beneficial in Nature as summer's heat. The storm has its uses, as well as the calm. So with temptations, they deepen and strengthen the soul in virtue. "What doth he know that hath not been tried," says the wise man (Ecclus xxxiv, 9).

Moreover, God will not permit us to be tempted beyond our strength. "He will not lead us into the deep waters, out of our depth." In religion we are furnished with weapons against temptation. We have, first of all, ever at hand the great weapon of prayer, to our ever near and present God, who is both willing and able to come to our help. "Pray that ye enter not into temptation," says Our Lord. It is an arm of defence that suits all times, places and circumstances. A cry of mind or heart, a devout sigh or ejaculation, and all the power of heaven is at our side.

Furthermore, occupation of mind and body, or both—the God-imposed duty of work, coupled with the happiness and cheerfulness that usually accompany it—is a potent factor in resisting temptation, whether from within or from without. If idleness is the root of all mischief, work, surely, is a remedy against the evils that spring from temptation.

But there are certain forms of temptation from without against which flight is the only remedy. Passion, when stimulated by evil suggestions streaming in through eye, and ear, and touch, is in most cases ungovernable. It is a leaf before the wind, a hungry lion within reach of its prey. We must fly danger. It is that part of the battle wherein retreat is obligatory. "He who loveth the danger shall perish therein."

Flight from unnecessary occasions is a condition of the efficacy of our prayer when we say, "lead us not into temptation." Why ask not to be led, if we are free, nay, *bound* to leave the battlefield.

II. We now come to the seventh and last petition of the "Our Father," "Deliver us from evil." It is the completion, if not the repetition, in another form, of the sixth; in fact, they are often joined together as one and the same petition, the latter part, "deliver us from evil," explaining the meaning of the former, "Lead us not into temptation." That God may deliver us from all evils of soul and body, in time and for eternity, is the main purpose of prayer in our personal needs. If granted, all is granted, and heaven won. This is not the place wherein to speak of the nature and origin of evil. It is a question that has ever vexed and perplexed the human mind; and we are still as far from a satisfactory solution of the puzzle as ever. In itself, doubtless, evil implies mere negation, limitation, defect, the absence of some quality or property, or adjustment that finite beings require for their full development and perfection just as withdrawal of sight is blindness, or of life, death, or of health, disease, or of due moral virtue, or other good qualities, vice or ignorance. Withal, this *negative* or *defect,* is the cause of very real and terrible evils, both in the physical and moral order. Pain and sin inflict untold evil, even though in themselves they are limitations, and imply only the absence of health and virtue. Evil in the *abstract* may be a nonentity—a *nothing;* but in the concrete it is but too real. A wolf or tiger among our flocks and herds, criminals among men, death or disease in our families, are all evils from which we have only too good reason to beg deliverance.

Happily, we know that evil is not God's doing. All that He creates or has created is good and perfect in its kind. Nor is evil independent of Him. He permits, controls and overrules it, nay, makes use of it for the promotion of good. Things good in themselves are evil to us. Things called evil are only relatively so. Birds and beasts of prey, storm, flood and fire are all His agents and workers in the kingdom of Nature. Pain calls attention to bodily needs, as remorse and the voice of conscience do to moral. Even bad men are agents in making good ones. Wicked people often help the world forward in the path of progress and reform, just as errors and heresies often bring forth defenders in the cause of truth. Even sin, which is perhaps a necessary result of the great gift of free will, the only real evil in the world, has its uses. It has given us our Redeemer. The very necessity of atonement, through the sufferings and death of the Man-God, show us its magnitude, and so put us on guard against it. Moral excuses, breaches of law, though sinful, criminal and inexcusable, have yet often been followed by an awakening of the public conscience to the need of reform, thus showing how God uses bad men and their bad deeds to do good work.

But all this is merely speculative. The fact that practically concerns us is that we find ourselves in this world beset by many evils from within and without—evils of body and evils of soul. To whom shall we have recourse if not to Him who is Lord and master of all? —"Our God, our refuge and strength, a helper in troubles" (Ps. xlv, 1). "The Lord is the protection of my life: of whom shall I be afraid?" (Ps. xxvi, 1). In whatsoever way help comes, ultimately it comes from on high. If Nature is stored with remedies against disease, if bands of devoted men and women devote themselves, their lives and energies, to healing the physical and moral evils, under which men groan, it is God who has given them light, skill and good will. We can succor them with prayer. It is the great force at the back of all efforts for freeing men from evil.

Pray, then, fervently that God may deliver us from evil, ourselves, our friends, our country, our holy Mother Church—all throughout the world, in short, who are in danger from any of the innumerable evils, to which men are liable. Above all, pray for men's deliverance from the worst of all evils—"sin and its consequences."

To the seven golden petitions of the Lord's Prayer we add, by

way of conclusion, the Hebrew word *"Amen,"* which, following a prayer, expresses an ardent desire that all its petitions may be granted. That "Our Father in heaven—the giver of every good and perfect gift, who knoweth what is good for us," may ever grant what He himself, through the mouth of His well-beloved Son, Jesus Christ, has taught in the Lord's Prayer, is our combined, most ardent wish and prayer, and a fitting conclusion to what has been said on the subject of "The Lord's Prayer."

# XLI. THE HAIL MARY

BY THE REV. C. P. BRUEHL, D.D.

## I.

"Hail! full of grace!"—St. Luke i, 28.

*SYNOPSIS.—Peculiar charm of the Hail Mary, redolent with the fondest memories of our childhood. Taught by our earthly mother and addressed to our heavenly mother. The golden key to the heart of Mary.*

*I. A prayer of praise. Our homage pleasing to Mary. She loves to hear the great things God has done for her. Reflects honor on Him. Choicest graces. God with her in life and in death. This praise wins the ear of Mary.*

*II. A prayer of thanksgiving. Beauty of gratitude. We bless Mary. We do not bless the name of Eve. To no one do we owe as much as to Mary. Again this gratitude most agreeable to her. This is a human way of looking at heavenly things.*

*III. Now we propose our petitions. A strong prayer of petition. A child praying to its mother. Full of confidence. Our needs manifold. This prayer always opportune. Meaning of the word "now." The hour of death.*

*No prayer by which we can so fitly praise, bless and invoke Mary. Should be recited daily.*

My dear friends, the Hail Mary has a charm of its own. It throws a sweet spell over our souls and goes straight to our hearts. There is a note in it which calls forth an echo in every Catholic breast. We will not try to analyze it; but we will surrender ourselves to its holy influence and magnetic power. Heaven and earth have united in forming this beautiful prayer. It is fragrant with the perfume of the angelic lips of Gabriel, who first pronounced this tender salutation; it is redolent with the holy breath of St. Elizabeth, who in enraptured ecstasy took up the heavenly strain of the archangel and added to it words of exquisite melody; it is vocal with the murmurs of the myriads who have devoutly repeated this hallowed prayer throughout the ages. Pick up a tiny shell on the sands of the seashore and hold it to your ear; the voices of the deep, the mysterious songs of the waves, all the harmonies of the vast, great ocean speak from the hollow of that neatly chiseled bowl. Thus the voices of heaven and earth, the melodious words of men and angels, the suppliant cries of saints and sinners are blended in the sweet harmony

of the Hail Mary. Aye, it is a great prayer. And more than that it is a prayer which we dearly love. It drops as dew from our lips. It is enshrined in the innermost sanctuary of our hearts, balmy with the fondest memories of our first childhood. We learned it from our mother. And her kind smile, and the soft accents of her voice, that now is hushed, and the mellow light of devotion gleaming in her eyes, that have closed in death; this all is bound up forever with the Hail Mary we daily recite. But above these visions of the past rises a fairer vision, wrapped in celestial splendor and glory: the image of our heavenly Mother, to whom we address the prayer, which we have learned from our earthly mother. Ah, we are not surprised at the subtle charm of this wonderful prayer and its magic power over our hearts!

Nor will we marvel, when we are told of its extraordinary efficacy as a prayer and a means of grace. It embodies all the elements of a good and strong prayer, and many have experienced and loudly proclaimed its well nigh infallible efficacy and irresistible force. The secret of the power of the Hail Mary lies in the intercession of the Blessed Virgin. As powerful, as widely extended, as reliable and efficacious, as is the intercession of the Blessed Mother, so powerful and efficacious is the Hail Mary; for it is especially and principally through the Hail Mary that we obtain and secure the intercession of our Blessed Lady. There is no prayer that will render the Mother of God so propitious to us, so ready to hear our petitions, so willing to take into her own spotless hands our cause, and to plead on our behalf with her divine Son, as the Hail Mary. It is the golden key to her maternal heart. It gains the ear and the good will of the Blessed Lady for us and makes us sure of her powerful intercession. We will try to understand why the Hail Mary has such a power over the heart of our Blessed Mother, and, hence, why it is for us such an unfailing means of grace and inexhaustible source of heavenly favors. We find the explanation in its threefold character; the Hail Mary being a prayer of praise, of thanksgiving and of petition. And in each one of these qualities it is unsurpassed and unrivaled.

Before we can propose our petitions and explain our wants to the Blessed Virgin, we must gain her ear and attract her attention. This is accomplished by the first part of the Hail Mary, which contains a salutation and the praise of the Blessed Mother. We salute our Lady by the same words by which the archangel honored her.

They must fall agreeably upon the ears of Mary, as the lingering echoes of a dear voice. And then we extol her greatness. We praise her. Praise is the tribute we pay to excellence. It is not flattery. Flattery comes from a mean and selfish heart. Praise flows from a generous and noble soul. Love has praise. Envy never praises; it belittles and censures. A noble soul despises flattery; but it accepts sincere and honest praise. And so does our Mother delight in the praise of her children. It sounds sweet to her ears. That praise which we bestow on our Mother in the Hail Mary is not exaggerated, not pompous, not obtrusive. It has the ring of sincerity. It proceeds from our love of the Blessed Virgin and from our admiration of her virtues. It is filial praise; sober, yet glowing with the warmth of affection. It is couched in a few words, it is rich in meaning.

"Full of grace, the Lord is with thee" (Luke i, 28). What more could we say; yet how could we say it with less pretension? These few words recall the great privileges of Mary, gratuitously conferred on her by God, and also her personal merits. Our Blessed Mother loves to hear what God has done for her; she herself chants not her own glory, but the grandeur of God: "He that is mighty hath done great things for me: and holy is his name" (Luke i, 28). But God has lavished His graces on Mary; and He has given her the choicest and finest graces. He has given her a purity of immaculate brightness, as that of a star elevated far above the dust of the earth. He has not given her a measure of grace but the very fulness of grace. He has heaped upon her His gifts and exhausted the treasures of His bounty. But even more. Not only God's gifts fill the heart of Mary; nay, the Lord dwelleth there Himself. His power overshadows her. His luminous presence surrounds her. The rays of His divinity penetrate her. She feels His wonderful nearness. Her heart leaps with joy, more so than that of John, who also felt the thrill of the divine Presence. Mary was the living tabernacle, where God made His abode. And, truly, God was with her. He was with her as a helpless babe, when she clasped Him to her loving bosom; He was with her as a growing child, when she held His little hand and guided His faltering steps; and He was with her when she held the lifeless form of His bruised body in her arms; He was with her in life and in death. But our Blessed Lady was also with God. Never did she separate herself from Him. Her thoughts were with God. Her will was united to

His. Her heart burned with everlasting love for Him. And she might well cry out, with St. Paul: "For I am sure that neither death, nor life, nor angels nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor might, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Rom. vii, 38, 39). Mary deserves our praise. St. Ambrose exclaims: "Mary, ever Virgin, is the greatest wonder of God. Who has ever been more holy than Mary? She surpasses in sanctity the prophets, the Apostles and Martyrs, the angels, the thrones, the principalities, the seraphim and the cherubim; among all creatures, visible and invisible, there is not one equal to Mary in grandeur and sanctity; not one who like her was, at the same time, the servant and the Mother of God, a Mother and a Virgin." As a solitary star on the brow of night the glory of Mary shines forth. And rapturously we cry out: "Thou art the glory of Jerusalem, thou art the joy of Israel, thou art the honor of our people" (Judith xv, 10).

"Mother! whose virgin bosom was uncrost
With the least shade of thought to sin allied;
Woman! above all women glorified,
Our tainted nature's solitary boast;
Purer than foam on central ocean tost."

—*Wadsworth.*

Mary rejoices in our praise; because it is prompted by love and filial devotion, and because it brings glory to God. "God is wonderful in his saints" (Ps. lxvii, 37). Especially is He wonderful in the Blessed Virgin, who is the masterpiece of all His works. She is the resplendent mirror reflecting His beauty, as the surface of a placid lake reflects the splendor of the starry heavens.

And now we have gained access to our Blessed Mother; the first words of the Hail Mary have attracted her ears; she listens to its beautiful strains. And always can we obtain a hearing with our Blessed Lady, when we strike the sonorous sounds of the Hail Mary. For it penetrates the very heavens and rings out above all other prayers catching and holding the attention of our Blessed Mother.

The second part of the Hail Mary contains a delicate tribute of gratitude to the Blessed Mother. Now, we know that nothing speaks more in our favor, gains more rapidly the affection of others,

unlocks the hearts and wins sympathy so readily, than gratitude. He who is grateful is considered worthy of new benefits. We never rue a gift conferred on an appreciative person, and we are willing to multiply our favors if we know that they are received with a sense of gratitude. Thus we also enlist the good feeling of Mary by our demonstration of gratitude in the Hail Mary. And such a noble, finely tuned, well-balanced expression of thankfulness! It is not as a full-blown rose in glaring colors, but as a half-closed bud, revealing the daintiest tints and suggesting rich and glorious dyes.

"Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb." We bless the name, the memory of those, at whose hands we have received great favors. Mary has been to us a blessing and a source of many blessings. Ah, we do not bless the name of the unfortunate, ill-fated mother of our race! Sad memories cluster around the name of Eve! Wo has it brought to mankind! It spells sin and death! It is a disastrous, ominous name! But the name of Mary is a luminous name! It is synonymous with grace and life! It conjures up before our eyes the happy events of the incarnation and redemption. No evil has come through her! And rightly do we bless her name! To no woman do we owe as much as we owe to Mary. And we acknowledge this debt of gratitude by calling her "blessed among women." "Behold, all generations shall call me blessed" (Luke i, 48). And Him whom she has given to us her only-begotten Son, we also bless. Gratitude will touch the heart of Mary and will incline her to grant us what we ask and need.

Gratitude prepares new favors. There is nothing more repulsive, nothing which makes us more undeserving of future kindness and benevolence, than to forget and ignore past favors. Ingratitude will chill the kindest heart and harden it against our petitions. It dries up the fountains of generosity and clogs the channels of kindness. Therefore, aspiring to new graces, we first show ourselves thankful for what we have already received. Gratitude for kindness of the past softens and chastens also the selfishness, which lies in every petition. No! we do not come to our Mother only to ask and receive favors; we come also to offer her the tribute of praise and of love and of gratitude. But must not a prayer, combining these elements in such beautiful harmony, be acceptable to our Blessed Lady? We now understand the efficacy of the Hail Mary and its high excellence as a prayer.

But some one may object that this is taking things in a very

human way. Be it so; but we are human, and can only represent heavenly things according to our human way of thinking and feeling. Did not Our Lord condescend to clothe eternal ideas in terms and images drawn from our every-day experiences? If we wish to speak of the Blessed Virgin and her relations to us, we must resort to terms and illustrations that savor strongly of this earth, where we poor mortals are at home. And, after all, our Blessed Mother had a human heart; pure it was, sinless, foreign to everything low and mean; but withal human. And every noble and lofty human sentiment we may attribute to her. Nor will the Blessed Mother be displeased if we speak of her according to our poor stammering human fashion.

III. Following upon the praise and thanksgiving by which we have honored our Blessed Mother, our supplications will now be most favorably received. Let us now forget the glory of our dear heavenly Mother, let us set aside her exalted position, let us close our eyes to her dazzling splendor; and let us think only of our misery and our needs. Let us pour into her ears the sad tale of our wo! There is a responsive chord in the heart of Mary thrilling to every human suffering. Mary has also born the heavy weight of earthly life. She has been familiar with tears and sorrow. Her life-path was rugged and thorny; and her feet were sore and weary. She will understand our sighs and prayers. Let us speak to her as companions in hardship and distress:

> "Oh, when our need is uttermost,
> Think that to such as death may strike
> Thou once wert sister sister-like!"
>
> —*D. G. Rossetti.*

"Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners, now, and at the hour of our death." There is not a superfluous word in this supplication. It is earnest, humble, modest, brief and strong. It has a terseness inspired by real need. It sounds as a cry for help. It is piercing as a signal of distress. This prayer, fraught with our tears, instinct with the anxiety of our hearts, winged by hope, we send from the dangerous shoals of time to the calm, serene shores of eternity. It is as the pathetic pleading of a child crying in the dark.

We do not ask anything in particular. We leave this to our Mother. She knows what we need; she knows how to help us. We abandon ourselves to her. What a tender token of confidence!

There is no calamity, no danger, no adversity, in which her health will fail, no pain which her intercession will not relieve. Do we not address her by such glorious titles, as: Refuge of sinners and help of Christians! Her maternal heart will suggest what is most beneficial and salutary for us. And so we say nothing more than, Pray for us, dear Mother, help us. For prayer means help; because the prayer of the Blessed Virgin is all-powerful with almighty God. St. Bernard says: "No one ever had recourse to her protection, implored her help, and sought her mediation without obtaining relief." It is very reasonable for us not to detail our wants; for they are many and numerous and of great variety; and we frequently lack discretion and desire things which are hurtful to our souls. But our Mother will exercise great wisdom and forethought; she will not give us fatal gifts and poisonous sweets. So we will pray in the humility of our hearts, with the complete trust of a child, with the stirring earnestness of a dumb appeal: "Mary, Mother of God, pray for us."

This prayer is always opportune. It is never out of season. It is adapted to all circumstances. "Pray for us now." There is not a monment in life that we do not need heavenly help. Every hour brings its own dangers. Every day has its burden. That little word "now" has a very comprehensive meaning. It embraces every instant of our life. From one single moment may our eternal happiness depend. But that important moment is not to-morrow; it is not the past and not the future. It is now. Eternity hangs on the present minute. This fleeting hour is pregnant with eternal issues. "Behold, now is the acceptable time: behold, now is the day of salvation" (II Cor. vi, 2). But, if this is so, if the present moment determines our eternal destiny, then we need the help of the Blessed Mother now, emphatically, at this very moment.

"Pray for us now!" When our footsteps falter on the way of virtue; when we grow weary and disheartened, climbing the hill of perfection; when our fervor languishes and our charity wanes; then may we implore our Blessed Mother: "Pray for us now." When doubts assail our holy faith; when our dormant passions are lashed into blind fury; when the allurements of the world and the seductive charm of sin blind us and fascinate our will, then again let us beseech our Mother: "Pray for us now." When the enraged waves of the sea roll high and threaten to engulf the frail bark of our life; when somber clouds darken the heavens and ruin besets our

every step; when the powers of the deep gather to draw us into the infernal abyss, then let us entreat Mary: "Pray for us now."

But most of all, "Pray for us at the hour of our death." Every moment of our life helps to shape our eternal destiny. One moment is decisive, final, irrevocable. It is the moment of death. The world forsakes us. Our friends are impotent. Our own strength declines. A narrow bridge spans the terrible chasm between time and eternity. The deep yawns dark as night. The glaring eyes of hell stare at us. A strange land lies before us. We stand at the gates of eternity. Our foot is on the threshold of another world. We are to make our last step. And everything depends upon this step: hell or heaven, bliss or wo, eternal life or eternal death. Well may we cry out: "Holy Mary, pray for us at the hour of our death." Help us, when earthly help is of no avail. Stretch out thy hand; steady our footsteps on that last and perilous journey; guide us into that unknown land. Ward off the enemies of our salvation. Lead us along the narrow path on the edge of the dreadful precipice. Inflame in our soul the torch of faith; shield the mild light of hope, glimmering in our bosom, from the chilling blast of despair! Save us! When the shadows of death gather about us, when our conscience is troubled by fear and remorse, when the specters of our sins rise against us; when the powers of darkness redouble their efforts; when agony convulses our wasted frame and cold perspiration moistens our brow; when our startled soul trembles on our lips, then may our last breath be a fervent prayer to our Blessed Mother in heaven.

My dear friends, there is no other prayer by which we can so well, so fitly, so effectively, praise, bless and invoke the Blessed Virgin, as by the Hail Mary. Great masters have composed it; an angel, St. Elizabeth and the Church; all three enlightened by the Holy Ghost. It has always proved to be a powerful prayer and a mighty means of grace. Then say often the Hail Mary. Let it ever be on your lips. It will purify your lips and sanctify your life It is brief. You will always find a minute to recite it. However much you may be in a hurry in the morning; however much you may be tired in the evening, you have a minute to spare for a Hail Mary. A Hail Mary, recited faithfully every single day of our life, may be your salvation. It will bring you comfort in afflictions, strength in temptations, safety in dangers, grace in life, help in death and glory in heaven. Amen.

# XLII. THE HAIL MARY

BY THE REV. C. P. BRUEHL, D.D.

## II

"Behold thy mother."—John xix, 27.

*SYNOPSIS.—Harmony of the Catholic religion with human nature. This shown in the devotion to the Blessed Virgin. Mary our Mother: this makes our Church a home and prayer delightful. This especially true of the Hail Mary.*

*I. A means of perseverance. Makes the service of God, the practise of virtue cheerful and prayer a delight. Perseverance obtained by prayer and constant prayer. Hail Mary gives a taste for prayer. Brings Jesus nearer to us.*

*II. Help in temptation. Mary crushed head of serpent. Will help us to overcome sin. Memory of a mother deters from sin. Mary a terror to the evil spirits.*

*III. Effects conversion of sinners. Frailty of habitual sinners overcome by daily recital of Hail Mary. An experience. Grace of final repentance after life of sin. Those who practise devotion to Mary will not be alienated from the Church. An easy prayer. Just and sinner should recite it daily.*

My friends, a striking feature of the Catholic religion is its harmony with human nature and its wonderful accord with all the nobler aspirations of our heart. There is not a lofty and pure sentiment that is not called into play by some practise or doctrine of our Holy Church; there is not a chord in our breast that does not vibrate with sweet music to the touch of our holy faith. And it is for this reason that the Catholic Church has such a firm hold upon its members, since it not only satisfies the cravings of the understanding, but also captivates the hearts and enlists every undefiled sentiment. One of these doctrines and practises appealing to the tender feelings of our soul is the devotion to the blessed Virgin Mary. According to Catholic teaching Mary, the Mother of God, is also our Mother. This position has been given to her by her divine Son. And if Our Lord is our brother, and, as St. Paul puts it, "the first born amongst many brethren" (Rom. viii, 29), then truly His Mother must be also our Mother.

Now, there is nothing that has such power and influence over the human heart as the name, the thought and the memory of a

mother. A Church that gives us a heavenly Father and a heavenly Mother must, accordingly, become endeared to us. It will not remain a cold and icy thing to our feelings; but it will necessarily grow into our affections and become a thing of the heart, an object of love and enthusiasm. It will be to us a home. And it is in this light that the Catholic looks upon his Church. Everything in it attracts him; he finds there the images of his heavenly Father and Mother; nay, their living presence. He loves to linger there. There he unburdens his soul. There he is cheered and comforted. There prayer becomes easy. The hours spent in the sweet silence of his heavenly Father's house and his heavenly Mother's home do not seem long; they have wings, and soft and soothing is their step.

The devotion to the Blessed Virgin makes religious exercises dear to us, and the Church homelike. It softens the solemnity of ceremonies and mitigates the awe that religion inspires. This is one of the reasons why we add the Hail Mary to the Our Father. The Our Father is a great prayer. But it is so overwhelmingly solemn; it has such a grave accent and proceeds in such majestic pace. Therefore, we mingle with the organlike tones of the Lord's Prayer the lighter keys of the Angelic Salutation.

The prayer, which can most emphatically be called the prayer of the Blessed Virgin, is the Hail Mary. It is an authentic formula, sanctioned by God and the Church and endorsed by all Christian ages and generations. It embodies all the characteristics of the devotion to the Blessed Lady and eminently produces its great and glorious effects. It is a polished mirror, focusing all that is best in the various forms of the devotion to Mary; even as the sparkling glow of the diamond flashes forth all the bright colors and tints which other precious gems only reflect in part. There is no exaggeration in the words of the devout Thomas à Kempis, when he says: "When I recite the Hail Mary heaven rejoices, the earth marvels, satan withdraws, hell trembles, all sadness vanishes, joy returns, the heart glows, the soul is filled with holy unction; hope animates my bosom and a wonderful consolation gladdens my whole being." The holy fathers are unanimous in extolling the merits and the power of the Hail Mary. Let us quote one more passage. It reads: "The Hail Mary is small in extent, but great as to the mysteries it expresses; it is easy to pronounce, but mighty in its effects; it is sweeter than honey and more precious than gold. It should be frequently on our lips and re-echo in our hearts."

The Hail Mary is a great means of salvation. Many a one has it snatched from eternal perdition and led to everlasting glory. Its efficacy is principally manifested in three ways. It obtains for us:

Perseverance in grace,

Strength in temptation, and

Final repentance.

I. Perseverance is the crowning grace of a Christian life. "He that shall persevere unto the end, he shall be saved" (Matt. 24, xiii). We are frail. Each new day brings its temptations and its struggles. Our fervor languishes. We grow weary. Perhaps the next day will witness our sad fall. And the goal is yet afar off. Many have begun under splendid auspices; but they came to a deplorable end. Their strength failed before they had reached the top of the mountain. Some ignominiously perished in the very sight of the gates of heaven. Yea, it is gift, and a great gift, the grace of perseverance.

We may obtain it by prayer in general; but especially by prayer to the Blessed Virgin. Through the hands of the Blessed Virgin we can receive all graces, consequently the grace of perseverance. The Hail Mary has a direct reference to this grace, as it invokes the assistance of Mary for the hour of death; but a holy death is the essential element of perseverance. Mary possessed in an extraordinary degree the grace of perseverance, since she never lost the initial grace that she received at her immaculate conception. She was faithful to every grace God imparted to her. Thus she can also procure this grace for her followers and children. Saint Bernard declares: "If thou dost enjoy Mary's favor, thou art sure of salvation." And a very happy and comforting assurance it is! No prayer will more readily gain for us the good will of Mary than the Angelic Salutation. Recite this prayer daily; recite it devoutly and the Blessed Mother will guide you unscathed through the lurking dangers, and she will prepare for you the crown of perseverance. Numbers, legions of blessed souls owe their salvation to the daily recital of the Hail Mary. Devotion to the Blessed Lady is a badge of predestination.

Constant prayer is indispensable to perseverance. But we will not pray constantly if we do not learn to love prayer. If prayer proves for us an irksome task we will shirk it. There is no easier prayer, none more charming, than the Hail Mary. We will never feel it burdensome to recite a Hail Mary. Through the

Hail Mary we will acquire a taste and love for prayer, and thus make sure of our perseverance. And then it is so easy to pray to Mary. It is like speaking to one's mother. The lips open spontaneously, the tongue is loosed, prayer wells up from the bottom of the heart; the eye is beaming with confidence, love and rapture. If you drop into a church and behold in the hallowed gloom of the subdued light a fervent worshiper, his knees glued to the floor, his eyes fixed on the altar, his lips incessantly murmuring in sacred monotony, you know that the beads of his rosary are slipping through his fingers, and that he is ever repeating with waxing fervor the Hail Mary. A long prayer may fatigue us or weary our attention; it may irritate our mind by overtaxing its capacity. Not so the Hail Mary. You can not become tired of it. It is short. It can not pall on you. It is profound and subtle. It can not vex your understanding. Its expression is simple. No, you will never find the shadow of an excuse for not reciting a Hail Mary. And so you will say your Hail Mary every day until your last hour, because it involves no difficulty, no effort, no supreme exertion; because it requires no time; because it will be in the way of no engagement; because it will become familiar, a habit, an unconscious practise. Thus, you will comply with the injunction of our divine Lord, "Always to pray and not to faint" (Luke xviii, 1). So the Hail Mary guarantees our perseverance because it makes prayer easy and delightful.

But after all Jesus is Our Saviour. "For there is no other name under heaven given to men whereby we must be saved" (Acts iv, 12). This is undoubtedly true. Yet it takes nothing away from the efficacy of the Hail Mary. If we remain united to Our Lord we shall live, we shall persevere. But the Hail Mary and the devotion to the Blessed Virgin bring us nearer to Jesus. The name of Jesus is emblazoned in the Hail Mary; it culminates in this saving name. Therefore, the Hail Mary has all the power and the saving qualities of the glorious name of Jesus.

Mary makes Jesus a living reality in our life; she makes Him a strong, clearly defined element in our consciousness and gives Him a prominent place in our affections. For those who do not honor Mary Jesus becomes but too frequently a vague sound and a being of the dim past. He is for them only a shadow. But united to Mary, His Mother, Jesus becomes real, living, breathing for us. For a shadow has no mother. Mary links us to Jesus and makes Him live in us. By means of the Hail Mary the memory of Jesus

and of His incarnation is kept alive in our souls; the great mysteries of the redemption are brought before our eyes; we live in Jesus and Jesus lives in us. Do we not say in the Angelic Salutation, "The Lord is with thee?" Well, then, if Mary is with us, Jesus is with us also. And if Jesus is with us we are saved. The Hail Mary, therefore, is a most efficacious means to be intimately united to Jesus and to remain in Him, who is the way, the truth and the life.

Mary is styled the gate of heaven. And the Angelic Salutation may fitly be called the key to heaven. Let us not tire of this beautiful and powerful prayer which will help us to persevere in grace, to remain united to Jesus and to attain to the glory of eternal life.

II. The Hail Mary is very helpful in overcoming temptations and sin. Through temptation we all must pass, as the gold passes through the crucible to be freed from dross and base alloy; as the grape passes through the scorching heat of summer to acquire its delicious ripeness. But they are dreadful moments when heaven and hell hang in the scales; for we may stagger and sink, never to rise again. We need not fear, God has provided powerful help for the fatal hour of temptation.

An impervious shield against the fiery darts of hell is the name of Mary and the Angelic Salutation. The power of Satan is paralyzed when we utter this holy name. St. John Chrysostom assures us, "The holy names of Jesus and Mary have an intrinsic power over the devil, and are a terror to hell." And well may we imagine it; is not Mary the woman that has crushed the head of the serpent? The blessed name of Mary spells defeat for Satan and his infernal kingdom. And it was precisely the Angelic Salutation that marked the overthrow of Satan's dominion on earth. The Ave Maria sounds to the ears of the devil as his death knell; it strikes terror to his very heart and thwarts his mischievous designs. As the shadows of night vanish at the approach of the dawn; as wax melts before the fire; so do the powers of darkness disappear and so does their force dwindle at the sound of the Hail Mary. Let us arm ourselves with this impregnable shield against the powers of the deep, "against the rulers of the world of this darkness, against the spirits of wickedness in the high places" (Ephes. vi, 12).

How many have been deterred from a foul and disgraceful deed by the memory of their mother! And will not the thought of our

heavenly Mother, of her maidenly purity, make us recoil from everything low and impure and shameful? However strong the temptation may be, if we think of our pure, undefiled heavenly Mother, we will not stoop to gratify our basest passions! Her memory will save us in the hour of darkness from degradation. And nothing will bring the thought of our Blessed Mother so forcibly before your mind as the Hail Mary. Mutter this little prayer and a sweet vision will rise before your eyes; Mary will loom up in all her splendor and celestial purity; her shadow will fall upon you and you will feel her eye pierce your very soul. Every evil thought will shrink back, as vermin creep into the dark crevices, when a ray of the sun strikes their hideous forms. The very atmosphere about you will become purified and hallowed!

And where will a child feel safer than near its mother? We know the absolute trust which a child places in the power of its mother. Nothing does it fear when the mother is nigh! Aye, but our heavenly Mother is powerful, "terrible as an army set in array" (Cant. vi, 3). She is the tower of David, impregnable against the assaults of the devil. She can put to flight all the infernal hosts! Let us seek her presence when the emissaries of hell assail us! Let us call her to our aid when the armies of darkness close in around us!

Let us fervently recite the Hail Mary in the decisive hour of temptation, and the Blessed Lady will be with us and we will not succumb to the violent attacks of the wicked spirits. St. John Damascene invokes the Blessed Virgin with the following touching words: "Draw near, dear Mother of my Saviour! Thou art my help, my consolation in life. Be near, and I will not be scorched in the midst of the flames of temptation; be near, and surrounded by the snares of the devil I will not perish; be near, and the waves and tempests aroused by the enemies of God will not wreck and shatter the bark of my salvation! I fear nothing, if thou art my protection! Thy name is my shield! Thy assistance is my armor! Thy help is my sword! By thy strength I repel the enemy and gain the victory!"

III. If the Hail Mary is made for anybody it certainly is made for the sinner. Of course we mean not the obstinate, hardened sinner who defies God and spurns grace; but the struggling, striving sinner, who falls through weakness and frailty and who groans under the weight of vicious habits, which he has contracted. For him the

Hail Mary is a precious boon: the antidote against relapse. Devotion to the Blessed Virgin will set the seal upon his conversion and ensure final repentance. Segneri, a great Italian preacher, tells us a very instructive story about a dissolute youth wishing to forsake his evil ways. Ah, but his passions had grown strong and evil habit held him with firm grip. He became disheartened, despairing of overcoming his inveterate habits. His confessor advised him to recite three Hail Mary's every morning in honor of the Blessed Virgin. After some time the young man returned full of joy and happiness; for by the power of the Hail Mary he had broken the bonds of his sinful habits. Mary had obtained for him a complete conversion.

I can relate an edifying incident from my own experience. A certain Saturday afternoon one of my penitents made her confession as usual. After she had received absolution she asked me to pray for her. As there was a lull in the confessions just then, I recited a Hail Mary for her. And lo! shortly after she returned, telling me that from shame she had concealed a grievous sin. Well, that Hail Mary had helped her to make good her confession and earn for her the grace of repentance. Whoever knows how strong false shame is will realize that Mary helped that girl to gain a great victory.

No; one can not remain in habits of sin while daily reciting a Hail Mary. The thought of the purity of the Blessed Virgin will fill his soul with shame, will make him loathe his sinful life; will prick his conscience and incite him to make heroic efforts in order to reform his ways. And the Blessed Virgin will encourage him, succor him and lavish on him the choicest graces, until he has emerged from the depths of his disgrace.

But I go further! I maintain that a person reciting daily a Hail Mary, whatever else his life may be, is not likely to be lost. I do not intend to encourage presumption or to embolden sinners to delay their conversion! That always is terribly dangerous and hazardous! Yet we have instances that men who led a notoriously bad life received the grace of a final and sincere repentance. And in some cases this grace was the reward of a single Hail Mary recited faithfully every day, even in the years of dissipation and debauch! Do not base your hopes of salvation on a similar practise; but do recite daily a Hail Mary. It may prove the anchor of salvation! It may be the saving straw in the rushing maelstrom of per-

dition! Mary is the refuge of sinners. She will stretch out her hand to rescue her clients when the mouth of hell threatens to engulf them.

My friends, great is the power of the Hail Mary. A wonderful prayer it is and easy for everybody. And then it so perfectly tallies with the better instincts of our heart, since it is a prayer to our heavenly Mother; a prayer to the purest, sweetest and most amiable of all mothers. If we are just, friends of God and children of grace, let us recite frequently the Hail Mary, that our heavenly Mother may obtain by her infallible intercession for us the great grace of perseverance. If we are battling against sin and struggling against temptation, let us recite often this beautiful prayer, that Mary may help us to rout the enemies of our salvation, to fight a good fight and to win the crown of justice. But if we have fallen into sin, if we walk on the edge of the precipice, if we are dragged down by the weight of our crimes, ah, let us implore the Blessed Mother to deliver us from this dreadful state and to save our unfortunate soul. And if we feel the grip of hell tightening on us, and our soul sinking into darkness, let us cry out with undaunted confidence: Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners. Amen!

# XLIII. THE ROSARY AND THE ANGELUS

BY THE REV. FRANCIS M. HARVEY

*SYNOPSIS.—Introduction.—The Rosary and the Angelus preeminently the prayers of Catholic faith. The very name of Rosary a grace.*

*Division.—The origin of the Rosary; its place in Catholic life; the indulgences attached to it; conditions necessary to gain these indulgences.*

*I. The Rosary springs from the Oriental custom of presenting the object of one's esteem with a chaplet of flowers. St. Gregory substituted prayers. To St. Brigid are due the beads themselves. St. Dominic gave the Rosary its present form.*

*II. The Rosary intended to combat the evils of modern society. The joyful mysteries an antidote to our lack of simplicity and to social discontent; the sorrowful mysteries are to offset our craving for sensual pleasure and our shrinking from pain; the glorious mysteries keep before us the hope of heaven and tend to spiritualize our daily life.*

*III. The indulgences attached to the Rosary. A slipshod observance of the formula will not suffice. The beads must be fingered as the prayers are recited. In the private recitation of the beads there must be a moral unity between the different mysteries. The truths of religion to be meditated upon during the recitation. How the Church enjoins devotion to the Rosary on her priests and religious.*

*IV. The Angelus. It unites the faithful with God's consecrated servants in prayer. The morning Angelus said at the hour of prime: the mid-day Angelus commemorative of the Passion; the evening Angelus said at the hour of compline. The Angelus keeps before us the fundamental doctrine of Christianity—the Redemption. Hence, most important to offset the prevailing tone of rationalism of our day. Calls to our mind the importance of belief.*

*Conclusion.—All in authority should see that those under their charge cultivate devotion to the Rosary and the Angelus. These devotions especially necessary for the young.*

The Rosary and the Angelus are par excellence the prayers of Catholic faith. They have come to us down the ages, hallowed by the lips and hallowing the hearts of a myriad army of saints. Their place in Catholic devotion, in the support of our spiritual life, is the place that bread holds in the support of our physical life, the constant, unvarying staple, building up the bone and sinew that must underlie all health.

The Rosary is inseparably linked with the spiritual life of the Catholic from his earliest years. The very word calls up sweet memories and tender thoughts; kindles a glow in the heart which is in itself a grace.

That our love of this devotion may be increased let us glance at its origin for a moment, and then call to mind its many advantages.

In the Orient, when one wishes to show his love, reverence and esteem for another, he presents him with a crown of roses. It was natural then that the early Christians, who were either Orientals or followed in their social and ceremonial life the customs of the Orient, should bring to the altars of our Blessed Mother chaplets of flowers. Realizing that these offerings of flowers had a value only inasmuch as they were the outward sign and symbol of love and devotion, and desiring to spiritualize the beautiful practise still further, St. Gregory substituted for these material crowns chaplets of prayers which he composed and distributed among the people. The one great drawback was that this practise could only obtain among the literate; they who could not read were unable to share in this beautiful devotion.

To St. Brigid, the co-Apostle of St. Patrick, is due the honor of extending this holy practise to all the faithful. For the elaborate prayers of St. Gregory she substituted one Our Father, ten Hail Marys and the creed, to be recited while meditating on the chief incidents in the life of Our Lord and His Blessed Mother. She also introduced from the East the practise of counting the prayers on pieces of stone or beads, as did the Solitaries of the Thebaid.

To St. Dominic we owe the Rosary as we have it to-day. Early in the thirteenth century a frightful heresy, known in history as the Albigensian Heresy, devastated France. It taught the existence of two gods, denied the efficacy of Baptism and Penance, and rejected Matrimony. So dreadful was the tide of immorality that they brought upon the country, and so subversive of public decency and authority were their tenets, that the arm of the civil law had to be invoked against them. St. Dominic, laboring to recall these mistaken souls, received a vision from Heaven, and was instructed by our Blessed Mother to introduce among all the people the recitation of the Rosary. In obedience to this order from on high, he and his devoted followers went among the heretics saying the Rosary and teaching it to all. The effect was marvelous. The mists of heresy were dispelled; all the abominable practises were given up, and by the fervor of their penance the people purged themselves of their guilt.

And from St. Dominic's day to our own the chief weapon of holy Church in combating the errors and the sins of the times has been the Rosary. From the days of Pius V. who appointed the first Sunday of October to be the Feast of the Holy Rosary, in grati-

tude for our Lady's signal intervention in gaining the victory for the Christians at the battle of Lepanto, to the days of Leo XIII, who enjoined the recitation of the Rosary as the one adequate means of combating the evils that threaten modern society, the holy Rosary has been the bulwark of Catholic faith and morals.

To the mind of the Holy Father the three great causes that weaken the bonds of public order and turn people aside from the way of honesty and morality, are: an aversion to an humble and laborious life, a horror of all that causes suffering, and forgetfulness of the future happiness to which God has destined us.

What could better meet the disgust of a modest, laborious existence and the consequent relaxation of domestic discipline, the irreverent disobedience of children, than meditation upon the five joyful mysteries? Here we are brought into the holy home of Nazareth, breathing an atmosphere of simplicity, peace, reciprocal love and respect, and, above all, that peace of soul and joy in God's friendship which are the only source of real human happiness.

As the contemplation of the joyful mysteries will insensibly result in the transformation of the individual, the family and all society from a chaos of warring interests and selfish passion to an ordered abiding place of spiritual peace and Christian charity, so meditation on the sorrowful mysteries will counteract that shrinking from pain and adversity, and a following after voluptuous pleasure, that is so characteristic of society to-day.

To-day, more than ever perhaps, men are pursuing as the social ideal a will-o'-the-wisp promise of perpetual ease and felicity. Less and less does the battle of life appeal to men; the sturdy overcoming of obstacles, the courage against sorrow, the fortitude to wear down adversity—all those strong, keen forces that dwell in labor and suffering, and the only forces that can mold the soul of man to the stature that God wills it should reach. The soft, voluptuous standard of life that is weakening society to-day, can not be better met than by the standard of the Cross. When we enter in spirit the Garden of Gethsemane, when we follow in the footsteps of the Man of Sorrows through all the phases of His Passion, when, with Mary Magdalene and the Blessed Mother, we stand beside the Cross of the Redeemer of the world, we must feel ashamed of that effeminacy that is eating into our daily lives and destroying the sturdy manhood that belongs of necessity to the Christian character.

As our Holy Father, Leo XIII, of blessed memory, points out, the evil that is peculiar to our age is a disdain of heavenly things. At no time in the world's history have men so pursued the perishable goods of the present life to the effacement of the memory of our eternal home. Never was St. Paul's solemn warning, that "here we have not an everlasting dwelling place," so completely disregarded.

There could scarcely be a surer sign of God's wrath aroused than this forgetfulness of higher things; the blindness and hardness of heart, that, we are told, visits those whom God would punish is here most evident. All loftiness of thought and nobility of action must perish when the highest standard man knows is the pleasure or the profits of the present moment. "Now, the Christian, who, Rosary in hand, meditates on the glorious mysteries, can never be exposed to such a danger." These mysteries place before the mind and heart of man a vision of that home which God has prepared for those who love Him. They teach us that death is but a door that admits us to a larger and more perfect life; that the love begun here on earth will have its eternal fruition in heaven; that the sorrows and trials of this life are passing shadows, to be dispelled by the glorious life of everlasting joy, shining full upon him from the face of Our God. How these thoughts will reanimate the burdened soul, enrich the mind and, above all, strengthen the will to meet life's difficulties and life's duties in a spirit of Christian courage. The calamities of life will be met and overcome with joy, for they will be recognized as God's appointed steps to the kingdom of heaven; hope will dispell the shadows of grief and add the glory of eternity to every earthly joy. Strength of character and true manliness will be fostered and that "spiritual mind," that is life and peace, will displace the sordid care for mere temporal benefits.

Such, according to the Supreme Pontiff, is the place the Rosary is to occupy in human life. Simplicity and content, fortitude and true manliness, hope and spiritual peace are to flow from this devotion as from the perennial fountain, causing to spring from the arid soil of daily life the fair and imperishable blooms of the Christian virtues.

There is another consideration connected with the devotion of the Rosary besides its excellence as a form of prayer, namely, the indulgences that may be gained by its means. To us Catholics, who

are ever engaged in working for our dead, this question of indulgences is an important one, and the Rosary is particularly rich in this spiritual treasure.

To profit by the indulgences attached to the recitation of the Rosary, it is not sufficient to observe the ordinary formula in a careless, slipshod manner, but certain conditions must be strictly fulfilled. To gain the indulgence attached to the private recitation of the Rosary of St. Dominic, it is of obligation to hold the Rosary in the hand, and finger each bead as the Our Father and Hail Marys are pronounced. Consequently, they who merely recite these prayers in their proper order, but without the beads, can not share in the indulgences of the devotion. Fervent prayers of whatever description will unquestionably bring God's grace and bring a blessing upon the soul, but to obtain the special helps known as indulgences, each and every condition laid down by Mother Church must be carefully observed.

It should be noticed that it is not sufficient to *hold* the Rosary, but one must touch each bead while reciting the appointed prayer. A special concession is made, however, when a number recite the Rosary in common, or when the devotion takes place at Church, for piety and attention under these circumstances suffice to gain the indulgences.

When the Rosary is recited privately, or not in connection with confraternities of the living Rosary, it is necessary to recite the five decades orally one after the other, for if too much time intervenes between the different decades the condition imposed by the Church is not fulfilled. On the other hand, they who are enrolled in a Rosary sodality gain the indulgences by reciting within each week the separate decades of the entire Rosary.

The truths of religion which are connected with the different decades are to be meditated on, at least in a general way. This is the mind of the Church on this matter, for the all-important thing in this, as in other devotions, is to have the mind spiritually illuminated by the mysteries of Faith and the heart and will warmed and strengthened unto salvation.

The Rosary is a key that unlocks the most precious treasury of the Church's favors. All may share in these benefits, rich and poor, lettered and unlearned. The Rosary is the refuge and support of the poor, and the favorite and most fruitful devotion of the rich.

In all religious orders provision is made for the daily recitation

of the beads, and in some communities the recitation of the entire Rosary of fifteen decades is of daily obligation. In our seminaries every aspirant to the priesthood is bound to assist every day at the public recitation of the beads or to say them in private. The Church would have her priests and religious deeply imbued with the love of this great devotion, that they may make it the daily practise of their own lives and labor to spread it among others whom they may influence.

Another devotion that appeals very powerfully to Catholic hearts is the Angelus. Like the Rosary, it is particularly Catholic, and comes to us down the centuries fraught with a great message and an enduring hope.

The Rosary commemorates the chief mysteries of our holy faith; the Angelus speaks to us of the great, the fundamental mystery—the Redemption. It is true that the triple daily recitation of the Angelus is to bring all the faithful in touch with those consecrated servants of God—the priests and the religious of his Church—in prayer. The morning Angelus is said at the hour when prime, a division of the sacred office, is chanted by the monks in choir; the midday Angelus had its rise at a time when lengthy prayers at midday were recited in the monasteries to commemorate the Passion and Death of Our Saviour, and the evening Angelus unites the laity with the religious in the recitation of the night prayer, or Compline, of the monks. Thus, by means of the Angelus all the faithful of God's Church are united in that mighty chorus of praise and supplication that rises continually before the great white throne.

But the devotion itself keeps before us the central fact of Christianity, the Redemption. Thrice a day we are brought to that rock-hewn grotto where the immaculate maiden knelt in prayer. God's messengers again speaks the most wondrous message ever given to mortal ears. Again we are lost in admiration of Mary's humility and simplicity as she declares herself the "handmaid of the Lord"; and then the dread fact is announced that the "Word is made flesh," and the redemption of man is an accomplished fact. Thus we are solemnly reminded that there is "No other name under heaven given to men whereby they may be saved."

As the Rosary is calculated to correct certain pernicious errors regarding life, so the Angelus, the memento of man's redemption, strikes at the root of a common and still growing opinion that would work the destruction of all supernatural life. Are there not some

who have the confidence to affirm that there are many other ways besides Christ whereby men may be saved? Is it not frequently stated that it is not of vital importance what men believe, so they are led by the spirit of morality, and observe whatever little law is known to them in a more or less effective manner; that the rules governing some sect or persuasion are sufficient in themselves to insure the eternal well-being of the man of good dispositions? This is a great and dangerous mistake, if it is not one of those damnable heresies foretold by St. Peter: "There shall be . . . lying teachers who shall bring in sects of perdition, and deny the Lord who bought them, bringing upon themselves swift destruction" (II Peter ii, 1).

The Angelus stands for the supernatural foundation of our holy religion. The Providence that rules and guides all things in God's Church has given to this devotion what is, perhaps, the most prominent place in her entire devotional system. Its sweet and tender associations have hallowed it not for Catholics only, but for countless others, who, though they do not recognize its saving message, are yet drawn by its innate beauty and power. The world of art, of literature and of music have honored it. It has been enshrined in the temple of poetic beauty, but all this is a false reverence after all, for it is intended to be the daily spiritual food of Christ's believing children; a message that is a repetition of the message of the angel bearing peace and good-will in the coming of the Redeemer.

All who have authority to do so should see that these two devotions, the Rosary and the Angelus, are generally cultivated. Above all should parents insist on them with the young, teaching their children a love of these beautiful prayers. We have it on the authority of many of God's saints, that content and joy, courage and spiritual strength and hope will of necessity result from the universal practise of the Rosary; and, according to the same authorities, the Angelus will preserve the spirit of faith and union with Christ clear and sure through all the darkness of trial and unbelief.

What power can temptation have against that soul that is arrayed in the invincible armor of these devotions The shafts of the enemy of souls *must* fall hurtless before them.

The Rosary and the Angelus should be on the lips of all, but especially on the lips and in the hearts of the young. The triple

daily recurrence of the Angel's Salutation gives, above all, the habitual attitude of prayer so supremely necessary in youth.

A clergyman was climbing the famous Weisshorn in the Alps with two guides. It had been a season of severe storms, and the climb was consequently more laborious, for the stepping places had in many cases disappeared. They had left the cabin shortly after midnight, but did not reach the summit before nine in the morning. The place was dangerous, consisting, as on so many peaks in the Alps, of splintered rock protruding from the snow. The leading guide stood aside to allow the clergyman to be the first on top; and he, exhilarated by the thought of the long climb over and the glorious view awaiting him, forgot the high gale that was blowing on the other side of the rocks and sprang eagerly up them and stood erect to see the view. The guide pulled him down, "On your knees, sir, you are not safe there except on your knees."

In our youth God lifts us all to *the* summits in life! High, splendid, perilous. But these heights are nowhere more perilous than in our youth—summits of knowledge, of friendship, of love, of success. As we value our moral health, our growth in character, our fitness for God's service, our eternal salvation, let us cultivate the spirit of constantly recurring prayer as found in the Angel's Salutation; then we may make of each and every one of these summits an altar on which to devote ourselves to His will.

# XLIV. THE LITANIES AND THE SALVE REGINA

BY THE RIGHT REV. ALEX. MAC DONALD, D.D.

"And when he had taken the book, the four living creatures and the four and twenty elders fell down before the Lamb, having each of them a harp, and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints." —Apocal. v, 8.

*SYNOPSIS.—The necessity and efficacy of prayer. It is natural that we should ask the intercession of the Blessed Virgin and the saints. The nature and use of the Litanies. Consideration of the Litany of the* (1) *Saints,* (2) *Holy Name,* (3) *Sacred Heart,* (4) *Blessed Virgin, especially of the titles, Morning Star and Mirror of Justice.*

Our Blessed Lord teaches us that, "We ought always to pray, and faint not." For prayer is a means of grace, and a necessary means of grace; not, indeed, a means by which grace is imparted, but a means by which grace is obtained. God has made it a condition of the grant of His grace that we should ask for it. "Ask and you shall receive, seek and you shall find, knock and it shall be opened unto you." These are the words of the Author of grace. It is not for us to question the condition; ours it is faithfully to fulfil it. In fulfilling it we may address our prayers directly to God himself, or to the Blessed Virgin and the saints, asking them to intercede for us. Indeed, an instinct of our nature impels us to seek the intercession of those who are so near and dear to God; for we feel, on the one hand, that we are unworthy of being heard because of our sins, and, on the other hand, our faith enables us to realize how great must be the influence of those favored ones at the heavenly court. That this sentiment is at bottom thoroughly human appears from the fact that it appeals even to men who are not of the household of the faith, as witness these lines of the poet Longfellow:

> And even as children, who have much offended
> A too indulgent father, in great shame,
> Penitent, and yet not daring unattended
> To go into his presence, at the gate
> Speak with their sister, and confiding wait
> Till she goes in before and intercedes;
> So men, repenting of their evil deeds,

> And yet not venturing rashly to draw near
> With their requests an angry Father's ear,
> Offer to her their prayers and their confession,
> And she for them in Heaven makes intercession.

What the poet says of the Blessed Virgin and her mediation will apply also to the "great multitude of all nations, and tribes, and peoples, and tongues," who stand before the throne of God; for they are with us, members of one great family—brothers and sisters in the communion of saints.

The official prayer of the Church is the divine office, which is recited by the clergy. Besides this there are other forms of prayer which are strictly liturgical, that is to say, authorized by the Church for use in her public worship. These are the litanies of the Holy Name of Jesus, of the Blessed Virgin, and of the saints; to which there have been added recently the litany of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, and the litany in honor of St. Joseph. There are many other litanies, but none of them is liturgical, none of them may be used but in private worship only. The Church allows the use of them, and, inasmuch as they are to be found in books that bear a bishop's *imprimatur,* may be said, in a sense, to approve of the use of them; for she wishes to let the devotion of her children express itself in the freest possible manner within the limits of what is sound and true. At the same time there can be no doubt at all that those litanies are best which she herself uses in her liturgical services; from this circumstance alone they are best, for they have a sacramental efficacy in virtue of her adoption, sanction, and use of them. Children are not very good judges of what is best in the matter of food or clothing, and we are all of us children in the things of the spiritual life. But the Church is a kind mother, and she lets her little ones indulge their taste and fancy in these things, so long as the food is not positively unwholesome, or the clothing altogether unbecoming.

A litany, in its first and liturgical sense, is a form of prayer or supplication, in which clergy and people unite, the clergy leading and the people responding. It is purely a prayer of petition, uttered in a spirit of penance; a united appeal to heaven for mercy, and for help in time of need. The plaintive iteration of the same petition, "Have mercy on us," or "pray for us," as the case may be, follows the example of Our Lord in the garden, where He "prayed again, saying the same words"; and the efficacy of such repeated

supplication He himself has brought home to us in the parable of the widow and unjust judge, who, though he feared not God nor regarded man, yet because of the woman's importunity granted her what she asked, "And will not God avenge his elect who cry to him day and night" (Luke xviii, 7). Even in private worship, where the prayer is not offered up in the name of the Church, the litany is still a most efficacious form of prayer.

The oldest of our litanies is that of the saints. It is, indeed, the great liturgical litany, used from a very early time in the solemn supplications of the Church, on rogation days and the festival of St. Mark, in the administration of Holy Orders, in the blessing and consecration of churches, as well as on other occasions. Not only is it the oldest of our litanies, or rather because it is the oldest, it is the one from which our other liturgical litanies have been evolved, at any rate those of the Blessed Virgin and of the Holy Name. Its three invocations of the Virgin, "holy Mary," "holy Mother of God," "holy Virgin of virgins," are, as it were, the triple germ from which the other invocations blossomed forth in the course of time. If the principle of development holds in doctrine, much more does it hold and operate in devotion. As for the litany of Jesus it is, in no small part, taken over bodily from the earlier litany. No fewer than nine of the invocations are word for word the same in both, while several others are all but the same, or at least express in other words the same ideas. This, perhaps, is the reason why it is not mentioned in the bull "Sanctissimus" of Pope Clement VIII, in which the other two litanies are prescribed for exclusive use in public worship. It is but an expanded form of the second part of the litany of the saints, the added invocations making it more suitable for private devotion. Indeed, it seems to have been approved by the Holy See especially for private devotion, seeing that it is not employed by the Church in strictly liturgical services.

That "the saints reigning with Christ offer their prayers for men to God," and "that it is good and useful to call upon them with supplication," we are taught by the Council of Trent. Even the Jews of Old Testament times believed in the intercession of saints, for we read in the Second Book of Machabees of the vision vouchsafed to the valiant Captain Judas, in which the prophet Jeremiah was pointed out to him as one "that prayeth much for the people, and for all the holy city" (*Ibid.* xv, 14). Now if saints who were yet in the

limbo of the fathers prayed for their brethren on earth, much more do the saints who reign with Christ pray for us, their brethren in this land of exile. And good, indeed, and useful must it be to call upon them, for they are rich exceedingly and we are poor. Yes, we are all of us children of Adam, poor and crippled from our birth. Even when our feet are in the way of life we walk but haltingly therein. One there was, "lame from his mother's womb," who sat daily at the Gate Beautiful of the temple, and sought his dole from every one that passed within. At last came one who of silver and gold had none, but had store of spiritual riches, and who took him by the hand, and in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth bade him rise and walk. Let us take pattern of this type and figure of our fallen race; let us stretch out suppliant hands to all who have passed within the spiritual Gate Beautiful, that through their intercession we may be enabled to walk steadfastly in the way of life, and at last enter the true temple of God which is "a house not made with hands, eternal in heaven."

Of the two litanies addressed to Our Lord, that of the Holy Name is much the older, as has been intimated, and, it may be added without disparagement of the other, has more of majesty and tenderness and sweetness. After the opening petitions for a favorable hearing and the invocation of the Holy Trinity, follow a number of pleadings for mercy, some thirty-eight in all. Here the glorious titles of Our Lord, and the qualities that marked Him as the loving Saviour of mankind, true God and true man, are woven into a chain of ardent supplication. It is to the Son of the living God, the splendor of the Father, the brightness of eternal light, the king of glory, the sun of justice, the Son of the Virgin Mary, that we sinners make moan; to the mighty God, the Father of the world to come, the God of peace, the Author of life, yea, to Our God for this, in a special sense, is He who was born of a woman and became one of us, who bore our weaknesses and carried our sorrows. It is to this Jesus, meek and humble of heart, the Good Shepherd, the Father of the poor, that we poor ones send up our cries for mercy. Among the titles given to Our Lord in this litany is one which appears in many, perhaps most, English prayer-books as "Angel of the Great Council," but which is correctly rendered from the original Latin, "angel of great counsel," or rather, "of the great counsel," a title that seems to apply to Him as the Divine Messenger who came down from heaven to declare to men, as His Apostle did after

Him and in His Name, "the whole counsel of God" (Acts xx, 27). The counsel of God, the design or purpose of God which the Son of God came not only to declare, but to work out, was especially concerned with the deliverance of mankind from the evil consequences of their fall in Adam. And as the last petition of the Our Father, Our Lord's own prayer, is "deliver us from evil," so the last petitions of this litany are so many plaintive cries for deliverance "from all evil," through or by virtue of the life, labors, death, resurrection and ascension of our Deliverer, who blotted out with His own blood the handwriting of the decree that stood against us.

The litany of the Blessed Virgin is commonly known as the litany of Loreto, for the reason that it grew up, for the most part, in the famous sanctuary of Our Lady at Loreto, on the shores of the Adriatic. Thither flocked throngs of pilgrims from all parts of the world, and as they gathered in and around the Holy House there went up a chorus of supplication to the Virgin Mother, which at last found orderly and consecutive utterance in the litany we know so well. Its invocations are not strung together in haphazard fashion, but fall symmetrically into groups about Our Lady's special prerogatives as Mother, Virgin and Queen; or, again, the grouping may be viewed as based (1) upon the excellences of the Blessed Virgin in her own person, (2) upon her relation to the Church militant, and (3) upon her relation to the Church triumphant. Her excellences are set forth under several emblems or types, such as "tower of ivory," "mystic rose," "morning star." The title, "Help of Christians," was introduced into the litany by Pope Pius V, after the great victory gained over the Turkish fleet in 1571, while the invocations, "Queen conceived without original sin," "Queen of the Holy Rosary," "Mother of Good Counsel," were added respectively by Pius IX, Leo XIII, and the reigning Pontiff, Pius X.

Each of the titles given to Our Lady in her litany would by itself furnish theme for a sermon. Let us glance at one or two of them. We invoke her as the "mirror of justice," yet very seldom, or never, perhaps, pause to reflect what the words signify. The word "justice" has not here its ordinary meaning, but denotes that state of moral perfection which we call sanctity or holiness. Now, God is sovereign perfection, and the Virgin Mother reflects this perfection as a mirror does the image of one who looks into it, or the placid surface of an Alpine lake the loveliness of the surrounding land-

scape. She reflects it, indeed, so far only as a creature may, but far more fully and more clearly than any other creature does. To reflect well a mirror must be whole and free from oil, and the waters of a lake unruffled by the faintest breath of wind. So, because the soul of the Virgin Mother possessed the integrity of original innocence, and was pure from all soil of sin, and unruffled by any gust of passion, it was a mirror in which the Holy One that was born of her saw His own image and likeness. "Do we ask," says Cardinal Newman, looking at the matter from another point of view, "how she came to reflect His sanctity? It was by living with Him. We see every day how like people get to each other who live with those they love. When they live with those they don't love, as, for instance, the members of a family who quarrel with each other, then the longer they live together the more unlike each other they become; but when they love each other, as husband and wife, parents and children, brothers with brothers or sisters, friends with friends, then in course of time they get surprisingly like each other."* None was so like Jesus as Mary, because none was bound to Him by ties so close, none lived with Him so intimately, none loved Him as she did.

Again, we invoke our Mother as the "morning star." The star is her fitting emblem because of the purity of its ray, because of its brightness that never suffers eclipse, because it is set in the firmament of heaven to shine upon the earth. And of all stars the star of morning symbolizes her most aptly, for, being one of the planets, it shines not with its own light, but borrows its radiance from the sun of which it heralds the rising. Not with created light does Mary shine, but with such light as never was on sea or land—"the light that illumineth every man that cometh into this world." Devotion to Mary thus leads up to and ushers in devotion to Jesus. When she appears in the darkness we know that He is nigh. "O harbinger of day," let us say with Newman, "O hope of the pilgrim, lead us still as thou hast led; in the dark night, across the bleak wilderness, guide us on to Our Lord Jesus, guide us home."

Once more we invoke Our Lady as the "gate of heaven." A gate is that by which one has access to or enters an enclosure. By Mary, the Son of God, the Lord of heaven, entered into this world; and by Mary we sinners, "exiled children of Eve," have easiest access to Him. Now, heaven is where He is; heaven is to be with

*"Meditations and Devotions," p. 32.

Him; even as He said to the penitent thief, "This day shalt thou be with Me in paradise." We may well believe that the prayers of the sorrowful Mother had no small share in gaining heaven for the good thief. And we, too, if we but walk in the way of penitence, shall through the same "gate of heaven" one day enter into the joy of the Lord.

Closely bound up with the Divine Office, of which, indeed, it now forms a part, is the Salve Regina, or "Hail, Holy Queen," composed at the beginning of the eleventh century. Because of its connection with the office it is a liturgical prayer, and, therefore, more efficacious as a means of obtaining grace. In it we call upon Our Lady as "our life, our sweetness and our hope," devotional words that are not to be taken in naked literalness as they sound, but rather in a rhetorical sense to express effusively all that she is to us. She is called our "life" by a species of hyperbole; or, again, by metonomy, because of the part she played in the economy of our redemption, by her consent to the Incarnation, by bringing into the world Him who is indeed our life, and by offering Him up for us to the death of the Cross. Our "sweetness" and our "hope" she is called, by the same figure of speech, inasmuch as she helps to sweeten for us the little trials of life, to light and cheer our way when all seems dark and our courage falters. Let us ever invoke her in the words of this beautiful prayer: "Hail, Queen, Mother of mercy! Our life, our sweetness, and our hope, all hail! To thee we cry, exiles, sons of Eve; unto thee we sigh, moaning and weeping in this vale of tears. Do, then, O thou, our advocate, upon us turn those pitying eyes of thine. And after this exile show us Jesus, the blessed fruit of thy womb. O mild, O loving, O sweet Virgin Mary!"

## XLV. MORNING AND EVENING PRAYERS

BY THE REV. H. G. HUGHES

"Give us this day our daily bread."—Luke xi, 3.

*SYNOPSIS.—The seriousness of life. "A point between two eternities." Frequency of a crisis in worldly affairs, and in spiritual life. Every day comes the choice between good and evil. Salvation to be worked out with fear and trembling. Dangers, needs, duties of each day. Summary of these. A task that might appall us; but we have a means of performing it—prayer. Strange that men will not use it. Its efficacy and value. Answers to prayer. "Pray without ceasing"— the spirit of prayer. Need of regularity in prayer in order to acquire the spirit of prayer. Daily prayer. Each day a compendium of life. Fittingness of morning and evening as times for prayer. The sinner going to sleep. Advice as to morning and evening prayer, with special reference to examination of conscience and contrition.*

Although it is all too easy for us to forget the fact, dear brethren in Jesus Christ, this life of ours upon earth is a most solemn and even a terrible thing. It is very short at the best; behind it and before it stretches an eternity; an eternity in which we were as yet nothing, though a multitude of causes were in operation which would eventually, under Divine Providence, bring us into existence and materially affect our career in the world; an eternity to come, in which finally and irrevocably we shall enter into the consequences of the use that we shall have made of our time and of that whole gift of free-will with which Our Creator has endowed us. Our life is truly, as has been said, a point between two eternities. And how much depends upon that short time of earthly life! There is often a crisis in worldly affairs when the action of a moment decides, and decides for good and all, great issues. A word spoken at the wrong moment may throw nations into war, and change the history of the world. A brave and courageous act done with great presence of mind in an instant may save a hundred lives. The pulling of a wrong lever may precipitate an awful catastrophe. And it is the same with regard to the spiritual life. A wrong step may lead to eternal ruin. A brave act of self-denial, or faith, or love and generosity to God may be, and often has been, the first step to sanctity. Each day and every day is the soul faced with the

choice between good and evil; and who can tell the consequences for eternity of the choice that is made? Time flies; an opportunity neglected may never come again. Life, indeed, is so short that the angels of God must look upon it, in comparison with eternity, as one great crisis for each human soul, a short instant in which that soul's fate is decided by its own personal act, even as the fate of the good and bad angels was decided instantaneously by the momentous decision of their free-will when the time of their trial came. In the face of these facts nothing can befit a Christian but the utmost watchfulness and care.

"Wherefore, my dearly beloved," writes St. Paul to the Philippians, "with fear and trembling work out your salvation." With fear and trembling, indeed, for the dangers are so many and human nature is so weak. About us are the works of evil angels, bent upon our destruction; we live in the midst of a world that holds out innumerable temptations to lure us away from God and to make us forget Him and our eternal interests. Day by day, as we go forth, we know not what snare awaits our footsteps, what ambush our enemies have set for us, what well-nigh overwhelming temptation may come in our way. And how are we provided, if left to ourselves, for resistance or escape? Alas, we have within us, by reason of our fallen nature, a traitor to the cause of God, an enemy of our salvation, an ally of the forces ranged against us—our own evil concupiscence and innate inclination to sin. Nature is weak; it is perverse; it is blind. We need light to see our dangers, to appreciate the awful import of our free acts, to see, in their right proportions, the relative value of the things of earth and the things of heaven. We need strength, fortitude, to resist the devil, to overcome the flesh, to repel temptation from whatever quarter it shall come. We need the "clean heart" and the "right spirit" for which the royal penitent prayed, that we may be all for God and not for self and earthly things. So weak, indeed, we are that we need every day and every hour to be supported by the everlasting arms of God, Our Father; every day and every hour to be nourished with the food of the strong that shall fortify us with a strength not our own. Moreover, besides these things, we can not be dispensed, even if we would, from the duty of praise and adoration and devout worship which every rational creature owes to the Maker of all things, the God of heaven and earth. Every day, also, we have the responsible duty of showing good example to those about us, who

are so deeply influenced for good or evil by our own conduct. How great, then, is the daily task of a Christian who would live according to the teachings of the Gospel of Jesus Christ! The elements of that task are well summed up in those "Subjects for Daily Meditation" that may be found in the beginning of some prayer-books. Remember, Christian soul, that thou hast this day and every day of thy life,

God to glorify,
Jesus to imitate,
The angels and saints to invoke,
A soul to save,
A body to mortify,
Sins to expiate,
Virtues to acquire,
Hell to avoid,
Heaven to gain,
Eternity to prepare for,
Time to profit by,
Neighbors to edify,
The world to despise,
Devils to combat,
Passions to subdue,
Death, perhaps, to suffer,
And judgment to undergo.

A task, indeed, that might well discourage us, to be performed in so short a time as this life gives; to be aimed at, indeed, each day that we live, since we know not how long a time yet remains at our disposal.

But we must not be discouraged at the magnitude of the task, nor even at our own weakness and incapacity.

Nay, it is that very weakness which is our claim upon God for the graces we need to perform it, and the recognition of our weakness will lead us, surely, to put all our confidence in Him, throwing ourselves upon His fatherly compassion, who gives us both the will to perform and the strength to accomplish what He has commanded. But this being truly our daily task, we must have some daily source of strength whereby we may be enabled to do God's holy will; and, dear brethren, that daily, nay hourly, source of strength, that source of strength which we have not merely every day and hour, but every moment at command is nothing else than prayer.

Brethren, what a strange thing it is, that men will not make use of this ever available means of grace and salvation. It is so certain in its efficacy; for Our Blessed Lord has assured us with His own lips that our prayers for all that we need to save our souls will infallibly be answered.

"Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and you shall find; knock, and it shall be opened to you" (Matt. vii, 7).

"All things whatsoever you shall ask in prayer, believing, you shall receive" (*Ibid.* xxi, 22). These are the words of Jesus Christ, and we can not doubt them. And the Apostle St. James writes in his Epistle, "You have not, because you ask not." The only thing that God will not give in answer to prayer is that which He knows in His divine wisdom would be to the detriment of our immortal souls and dangerous to our salvation. Temporal blessings and advantages, as well as spiritual things, He very frequently, and in the most striking manner, grants to trustful prayer, especially through the intercession of His Blessed Mother and the saints; and the history of the Catholic Church is full of examples of such answers to prayer, given in order to increase our faith and confidence in the value of persevering and believing supplication.

It is no wonder, then, that Our Blessed Lord inculcated the duty of constant prayer. "He spoke a parable," St. Luke tells us, "that we ought always to pray, and not to faint" (Luke xviii, 1). "Pray without ceasing," wrote St. Paul to the Thessalonians (I Thess. v, 17).

It is not possible, indeed, that we should be always upon our knees, nor always actually uttering the words of prayer. But we can have, and we ought to have, the *spirit* of constant prayer; the spirit, that is, of one who recognizes his utter dependence upon God, who remembers always the Divine Presence, and that "in God we live and move and are."

Now, this spirit of prayer, dear brethren, can certainly not be acquired except by regularity in the actual practise of prayer at certain fixed times. Without doubt no Christian ought to pass a day without actual and conscious prayer to God. Each day is, as it were, a compendium of human life. After the unconsciousness of sleep, when will and reason are in abeyance, and man is incapable of any responsible act, life, conscious life, begins again with the morning light. And when darkness comes again and man lays him down to rest, that conscious life ceases for a time. The day is given to man, especially, as his time for labor and accomplishment; it is especially his opportunity, his time for merit and for service. "Thou hast appointed darkness," sings the Psalmist, "and it is night; in it shall all the beasts of the wood go about; the young lions roaring after their prey, and seeking their meat from God. The sun ariseth, and they are gathered together; and they shall lie

down in their dens." But *"Man shall go forth to his work and to his labor until the evening."* Thus is each day a gift of God like life itself; and the life also it is a time of trial and of probation, full of great possibilities for good or for evil, according as it is used. Daily prayer, then, is a duty, and an indispensable necessity, from the very nature of man's life and the natural divisions of time; by reason of needs and duties daily renewed; by reason particularly of man's ignorance of the future, his uncertainty of what each day will bring forth. Hence, our divine Lord, in that model prayer which He taught us, plainly implies that it is to be used every day. "Give us this day our daily bread." And if prayer should thus be our daily practise, there are also certain times in the day, two at the very least, when it is proper and, indeed, incumbent upon a Christian to approach his God in prayer and praise. Those times—natural instinct alone would be sufficient to teach us this—those times are the morning and the evening.

What can be more fitting, what more obvious in its fittingness, than that our first waking thoughts should be directed to that heavenly Father on whose protection we have rested during the night? Oh, sinners! You who lie down night after night to fall into that unconsciousness which is the very image of death—I pause to ask you if there are any such here—how do you dare? You, rebels against God, deserving of His wrath, at enmity with Him, you are obliged to put yourselves, whether you will or not, into His hands for many hours, the dark hours of the night. Waking, you may think that your own watchfulness may save you from harm, from accident, from death—though in truth it is not so unless He wills it to be so—but sleeping, what avail your powers? They are for the time being as dead.

But this is a digression, dear brethren; one that you will easily pardon, for it was scarce possible to recall the thought of night and not think of the sinner sunk in dreams with nothing to protect him but the long-suffering mercy of his God.

So important is it, and so fitting to begin the day with God, that all spiritual writers who treat of the subject would have us turn our thoughts to Him as soon as ever we are awake. It is an excellent habit, and one not difficult of acquirement, to make the holy sign of the Cross immediately upon waking, and to invoke the adorable Trinity.

"Blessed be the holy and undivided Trinity; now and forever";

these words, or some like them, will suffice to put us into God's holy presence and to recall to us our position and our duties as Christians, children of God and of the Holy Catholic Church. While dressing we should keep our thoughts upon God and holy things; for we have still the duty of set prayer to fulfil, and it would not be well to distract our thoughts by worldly affairs. They will take up our interest and attention far too much during the day, and this time that we have before we go forth to labor should, at least, be sacred; this time, at least, we should make sure of. The necessary acts of dressing, washing and such-like may well suggest to us thoughts of Our Blessed Lord—His being clothed with the robe of derision, His humbly washing the feet of His Apostles; and also that spiritual robe of grace that we must wear, and the washing from stains of sin that we need. "Thou shalt sprinkle me with hyssop, and I shall be clean: Thou shalt wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow" (Ps. L). "Put off . . . the old man, who is corrupted according to the desire of error. And be renewed in the spirit of your mind; and put on the new man who, according to God, is created in justice and holiness of truth" (Eph. iv, 24). These words of Holy Scripture express thoughts that might well occupy our minds at the time of which I speak. Our morning prayers should be said without delay. Work and danger will soon begin; and we should anticipate them by invoking the Divine Blessing and assistance.

Be sure, dear brethren, that as each day has its special temptations, its special task, its special dangers, all of which God foresees—so, too, He has prepared for each one special graces to meet those dangers, and for the accomplishment of those tasks. For the bestowal of those graces He has laid down but one condition—He wills to be *asked* for them. How imprudent, or, rather how signally foolish, to embark upon the day without a petition for the help we need so sorely! It is altogether good, and to be recommended, that we use a set form of morning and evening prayers. Mental prayer is, indeed, the "more excellent way"; and the spending of a quarter of an hour daily in that exercise is of benefit simply incalculable. But not all can give time regularly to this, though none ought to live without practising it in some form from time to time at least, as at Holy Mass, or after Holy Communion, or when visiting the Blessed Sacrament. Yet we must pray daily, and a set form of morning and evening prayers, varied from time to time to

avoid monotony and routine, will ensure that our daily dues of praise and prayer are paid.

At the end of the day it is no less proper and no less a duty than in the morning to approach the Throne of Grace. And there is a special duty incumbent upon us at night-time—the duty of examining our consciences and of sincere repentance for any sins that we have committed during the day. A short time will suffice to ask ourselves whether and wherein we have sinned by thought or word, by deed or omission. And who should dare to commit himself to sleep without first making his peace with God if so be that he has offended the Divine Majesty? Thank God that even if mortal sin has been committed, a man need not lie down to rest with that stain upon his soul. He can make an act of true contrition and a firm purpose of amendment, and go to rest at peace with his God. Having thanked God for his mercies and besought God's protection the Christian should go to sleep with holy thoughts. He may think of the day of death when he shall lie for the last time upon his earthly bed; he may think of the choir of angels who rest not night or day crying, "Holy, Holy, Holy! Lord God of Hosts!" and he may unite his intention with them, desiring that he might even in sleep join in that song of praise. Holy thoughts are most needful at this time, for the devil sleeps not and will often take advantage of that half-conscious state that comes between waking and sleeping. Holy thoughts, and holy thoughts alone, will be our safety then. May I quote to you some beautiful lines by a poet whom you know not, but who has with singular felicity expressed a frame of mind most fitting for a Christian about to sleep:

"Now is the dead of night, and I must sleep;
But first, my soul, if thou dost aught recall
Wherein thou hast done ill, I bid thee weep,
And pray God's tender mercy on the fall;
Be all for heaven; think life draws near the close;
Give to repentance thy last conscious breath;
For more and more this mortal weakness grows
That pledges thee to take the form of death,
And sleep awhile. What if in dreams the door
Of life should shut, and thou return no more?"

(From "Before Sleeping," by Caryl Battersby, in "The Song of the Golden Bough.")

"He who prays," said a great saint, "will be saved. He who prays not will be lost." Faithfulness to morning and evening prayers—looking upon them as a duty owed to God—a duty never to be omitted, will do much to make us men and women of prayer. It is scarcely possible that one who devoutly prays every morning and every evening should go far in offending God. And, dear brethren, I shall not be asking of you any very hard thing if I exhort you to make a resolution that you will more regularly and more fervently give this service to God, and at the same time do inestimable good to your own souls.

## XLVI. THE WAY OF THE CROSS

BY THE RIGHT REV. ALEX. MAC DONALD, D.D.

"And taking up his cross he went forth unto the place that is called Calvary, but in Hebrew Golgotha."—John xix, 17.

*SYNOPSIS.—The efficacy of the Way of the Cross. Its antiquity. Its place among the other devotions. The nature of this devotion. Scripture or tradition or sound reason, or all three together, authorize the various stations. Methods of making the stations. Conditions required for the gaining of the indulgences. Exhortation to practise frequently and devoutly this beautiful and fruitful devotion.*

In a brief, bearing date August 30, 1741, Pope Benedict XIV declares that "of all the exercises of piety which set before us the sufferings and death of Our Lord Jesus Christ none is more efficacious in converting sinners, kindling the lukewarm, and spurring the good on to perfection, than the Way of the Cross." The experience of Christians in every land will bear out these words of the great Pontiff. Indeed, it may be said that of all Catholic devotions the Way of the Cross is one of the most fruitful; that as a means of grace it comes next to the Holy Mass and the Seven Sacraments. It serves to bring home to us as no other devotion does what the Holy Mass really is. "The Passion of Our Lord," says St. Cyprian, "is the sacrifice that we offer." The Mass is not a new sacrifice. It is not and must not be thought of as other than that which Christ offered on the altar of the Cross. To conceive of it as apart from or out of relation with that one Eternal Sacrifice which it presents again to the Eternal Father and prolongs forever, is to conceive of it wrongly and falsely; for the Mass "shows forth the death of the Lord," not in words merely, nor merely as a picture does the living original, but in deed and in truth. This is our faith as Catholics, and only with eyes of faith can we see this to be true. Now faith is a purely spiritual gift, and we are creatures of sense. To bring home to ourselves the things of faith we need the help of sensible images that will picture them for us. And this is just what we have in the Stations of the Cross—a series of pictures setting before us the most striking scenes of the Passion and Death of Our Lord. There is no more fitting preparation for Mass, therefore, than the

Way of the Cross; no better means of realizing to ourselves all that the Mass means and is than to go the round of the stations, treading in spirit in the footsteps of Him who for us sinners took up His Cross and "went forth unto the place that is called Calvary." Each separate station seems to cry out to us as with a loud voice, in the words of the olden time, "O all ye that pass by the way, come and see if there be sorrow like unto my sorrow."

This devotion is as old as the Church. In substance and essence it is but a meditation, a prayerful thinking upon, the Passion of Our Lord, and it can in no way be doubtful that those faithful men and women who were eye-witnesses of it, did ever after, from time to time, call to mind and dwell prayerfully upon that heart-rending yet most sublime and consoling spectacle—a God laying down His life for love of men, the life, namely, that was His when He "was found in fashion as a man." An old tradition has it that the Virgin Mother of God, through whose own soul a sword of sorrow passed, used, after the ascension of her Divine Son into heaven, to visit the scenes forever hallowed by His sufferings and death; and we can well believe it. Even if there were no tradition, we could be reasonably sure that she did so, for some things there are that we need no testimony of, whether oral or written, as being rooted and implied, so to say, in our common nature. We know that she possessed, in an exquisitely refined form, the feelings which prompt even men, not less than women, to do the like to-day.

I have said that, in its essence, this devotion is a pious meditation on the Passion of Our Lord. The stations, the series of pictures, are but means to this end—the crutches, as it were, by which a halting imagination moves along from stage to stage the Way of the Cross. Hence, we find that the indulgences are attached not to the pictures, but to the little crosses of wood which represent the Cross to which Our Lord was nailed. And if, to gain these indulgences, one must move from station to station, or, at least, if the place is crowded, turn around with the person who does so, this would seem to be because they were first granted to those who visited in person the scenes of the Saviour's passion, and only later extended also to those for whom a pilgrimage to the holy places was morally impossible.

The Stations of the Cross, as we have them to-day, date from the sixteenth century.* Before that time there was great diversity

*"The Stations of the Cross," Chap. V., by Herbert Thurston, S.J.

both as to the method of making the stations and as to their number. The indulgences are attached to the particular set of fourteen stations that are now in use. But it should be borne in mind that the gaining of the indulgences is not conditioned on one's meditating upon each of the scenes represented in these stations. The essence of the devotion consists, as has been said, in meditating on the Passion of Our Lord, and so one may gain the indulgences by dwelling on what is represented in a single station while making the round of the rest; or, if one is not capable of so fixing one's mind, simply by dwelling in a general way on the Passion.* It is important to remember this, for then it will be plain that the devotion of the Way of the Cross does not depend, in any essential way whatever, on the particular scenes pictured in the successive stations, nor on whether the several events are presented in the order of their actual occurrence, nor even on the truth to fact of a given scene. Supposing that "We have no sufficient warrant for the episode of Veronica, none for the meeting with our Blessed Lady, none for the three falls," such a lack would be purely incidental, would not touch the core of the devotion, and would in no way interfere with the gaining of the indulgences. At the same time the Church, in setting the seal of her approval on the particular set of stations now in use, would seem to guarantee in some sort the substantial truth of that which is represented in each one of them. Let us see how this may be.

Of the fourteen stations nine, namely, the first, second, fifth, eighth, tenth, eleventh, twelfth, thirteenth and fourteenth, are scriptural; that is to say, represent scenes that are set forth, or at least plainly implied, in the Gospels. Of the remainder, the fourth, which pictures the meeting with Our Lady, rests partly on tradition and partly also on Scriptures. We learn from St. John that the Blessed Virgin stood near the Cross of Jesus on Calvary (*Ibid.* xix, 25). We learn from St. Luke that a great crowd of people, including women, followed Him to the place of crucifixion (*Ibid.* xxiii, 27). Now, we can not reasonably suppose that the Virgin Mother, who would so willingly have given her own life for her Son, did not reach the spot where He was crucified until the

* S. Congr. of Indulgences, February 16, 1836. For this and other valuable information I am indebted to a booklet, entitled "La Picola Via Crucis," by Pietro Maria De Amicis, Priest of the Mission, the 3d ed. of which was published at Rome in 1906.

great crowd that followed Him had already come thither. We can not suppose that she lagged behind the rest, and sought not to comfort Him with her company while He trod the way of suffering and bitter humiliation. The fact that she was near Him as He hung on the Cross suggests and seems to vouch for the fact that she sought to be near Him on the Way of the Cross; that as soon as she could join Him on His issuing from the hall of judgment and taking up the Cross, she did so.* An ancient tradition assures us that she did. And if we can not trace it back by means of written document beyond the thirteenth century, this is not to be wondered at, considering the paucity of such documents in the East, and the state of struggle for mere life that the Christians there had been reduced to owing to the inveterate hostility of Jews, Romans, Persians, and Saracens. If we have not, then, strict historical warrant for the meeting with Our Lady, we have facts certified by Scripture that serve to bear it out, and we have the support of a tradition that stands until it is disproved by positive evidence. The same is true of the episode of Veronica, depicted in the fifth station. It tallies well with the Gospel statement about the holy women who bewailed Our Lord as He passed along laden with His heavy Cross, and were eager to do what they could to comfort Him. And it, too, rests on a tradition against which nothing can be urged save the fact that no written record of it can be found in ages when written records were few indeed and far between; when oral tradition, not writing, was the great medium by which truth was handed on.

As for the three falls shown forth in the third, seventh and ninth stations, it should be observed that a series of carvings made by Adam Krafft, of Nuremberg, in the fifteenth century, represent as many as seven, and are known as the "Seven Falls."† The Evangelists do not tell us that Our Lord fell even once on the way to Calvary, but their brief narratives give no details of that dolorous journey. We may gather, however, from what they do say, and from what we know of the woful state of weakness through fatigue

*Others, like the women of Galilee, who were devoted to the service of the Master, bewailed their friend. Among these must have been one more courageous than the rest, though more rudely jostled—in following the Victim, she followed her Son—it was Mary, the Mother of Jesus, whom we shall presently see at the foot of the Cross." I translate from the 7th ed. of Mgr. Le Camus's "La Vie de N. S. Jésus-Christ," tom. 3, p. 367.

†"The Stations of the Cross," Chap. IV.

and loss of blood to which He was reduced, that He would be likely to fall again and again on the slippery highway under His heavy load. It is plain from the fact that the Jews had to impress Simon of Cyrene to carry the Cross behind Our Lord, that they saw He was Himself unable to carry it, and His inability to carry it would have appeared especially from His falling under it. In our stations the second and third falls are represented as having taken place after the Cyrenian was constrained to carry the Cross behind Jesus, as St. Luke puts it—an expression that has been interpreted to mean that He did not carry the whole Cross, but only helped to carry the part of it that dragged along the ground. It might be maintained also that he did not carry the Cross all the rest of the way to Calvary, but only until Our Lord had so far recovered that it was thought safe to lay it on His shoulders again. Three Evangelists tell us that the Cyrenian carried the Cross, but none of them tells us that he carried it to Calvary. And St. John, passing in silence over the part taken by the Cyrenian, would seem to imply that it was but a subordinate one.

Even if we grant that these two falls are to-day set forth out of their due sequence, what does it matter provided we have reason to believe that they really did take place? Facts are facts, whether set down in their proper sequence or not, and we know what license is allowed to painters and poets. Nay, we know that St. Matthew relates several events in the life of Our Lord out of their time sequence; and if an inspired writer could do this, consistently with truth in an historical narrative, much more could a painter do the like in a work of devotion. What warrant have we, then, for believing that Our Lord fell at least three several times on the road to Calvary? We have, indeed, no strictly historical warrant. But even in doctrine, even in matters of faith, we Catholics have other warrant besides the written or printed word. There is tradition, and there is reason enlightened by faith. Certainly it is matter of tradition that Our Lord fell several times under the Cross. And besides the fact that the thing is very likely in itself, we have private revelations made to the saints to the same effect. This, it is true, does not give us absolute certainty, but it does give us that degree of probability which is enough to warrant the pious assent of the mind in a matter of devotion.

In making the Way of the Cross each station should be visited in turn, unless the number who are making it should be so large as

to render this impracticable, in which case some motion of the body is still required.* The stations are to be visited one after the other without interruption (S. C. I., Jan. 22, 1858). A short interruption, however, and even a larger one when it does not destroy the moral unity of the action, will not prevent the gaining of the indulgences. Thus the Sacred Congregation has declared (Dec. 16, 1760) that the indulgences may be acquired by one who stops, in the course of making the stations, to hear Mass, go to Confession, or receive Holy Communion, etc., because in such cases there is no moral interruption. One may stand, or kneel, or sit, do any or all of these, while visiting each station, for no particular posture of the body is prescribed. No vocal prayer whatever is laid down as necessary, but only meditation on the Passion, and as far as may be on the particular scene depicted in each station. It is well, however, and for most persons very helpful, to follow some one of the methods of making the Way of the Cross given in our prayer-books. The surest way to derive benefit from this pious practise is always to set before one's self some particular intention, such as the expiation of one's sins, the ridding one's self of some failing or imperfection, victory over some temptation, the acquiring of a particular virtue, especially humility, the gaining of some grace or favor. One should always, too, have the intention of gaining the indulgences that the Sovereign Pontiffs have granted to those who piously perform this holy exercise. To gain these, it is necessary, of course, to be in the state of grace, but Confession, and Communion, and prayer for the intentions of the Holy Father, which are the ordinary conditions of acquiring a plenary indulgence, are not prescribed.

While it is certain that several indulgences, both plenary and partial, are attached to the Way of the Cross, it is impossible to say to-day just what and how many these are. This is owing to the fact that the indulgences were originally given to those who visited the Stations of the Cross in Jerusalem, and that the old lists of those indulgences have perished. In a brief issued in 1731, Pope Clement XII forbade any announcement to be made from the pulpit, or otherwise, as to the amount or definite number of indulgences, and declared that it "will be enough to say that whoever meditates on the Passion of Our Lord during these holy exercises, by the concession of the Sovereign Pontiff, will gain the same indulgences as

*"Aliquem corporis motum."—S. Congr. Indulgences, February 26, 1841.

if he had personally visited the Stations of the Cross in Jerusalem." It appears from this, once more, that the essence of this devotion lies in meditation on the Passion, while visiting the stations, and that such meditation is the one essential condition of gaining the indulgences in the case of any person who is in the state of grace. All the partial indulgences may be gained *toties quoties,* that is, as often in the day as one makes the Way of the Cross, and it is probable, though by no means certain, that the same is true also of the plenary indulgences.

There is no devotion more popular with the faithful in every land than the Way of the Cross. Not only is it profitable to those who practise it, but it is helpful also in the highest degree to those that have passed out of this world, and are still retained in purgatory, because of the numerous indulgences that are attached to it and are applicable by way of suffrage also to them. Let us persevere, then, in this holy and wholesome practise. Let us often make, and daily if possible, the Way of the Cross, for our own sakes as well as for the sake of the dear ones that are gone before; yea, and for the sake of Him who first made it for us in weariness, and pain, and anguish of spirit, and who still bids us sinful ones to come and see if there be sorrow like unto His sorrow.

# XLVII. PROCESSIONS AND PILGRIMAGES

BY THE REV. JOHN W. SULLIVAN

"And a very great multitude spread their garments in the way; and others cut down boughs from the trees, and strewed them in the way; and the multitude that went before and that followed, cried saying: Hosanna to the Son of David; Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord."—Matt. xxi, 8.

*SYNOPSIS.—Solemn procession and pilgrimage of Palm Sunday. A procession with Christ as the central figure—religious emotion of the multitude for Him. A pilgrimage in accordance with the Law requiring all Jews to come to Jerusalem for the Paschal Feast.*

*II. Processions and pilgrimages, sacred and secular, are as old as the race—Jews and Gentiles had both.*

*III. Church's object to set before us certain events in Our Lord's life and certain doctrines of the faith—thus to confirm our belief and to strengthen us in virtue. Various times for processions and pilgrimages. —History.*

*IV. Religious spirit—Everything in procession brings out the fact that Christ is the central idea—starting-point—cross—banners, etc. Same obtains in pilgrimages—Dr. Johnson's words—thankfulness, reverence—penitence.*

*V. Faith renewed and strengthened—Our nature social—effect of this on large gatherings—sense of association is the soul of corporate action—Our Lord used this on Palm Sunday—Church enlists it in all her processions and pilgrimages.*

*VI. Some may scoff at and condemn them—they are means of enkindling faith and zeal—of bringing us and others nearer to Christ—we should miss no opportunity of taking part.*

These words picture to us Our Lord's solemn entrance into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday. It was one of the most important acts (if one act can be called more important than another in a life in which all the acts are divine) of His entire earthly life. It was the great public act by which He entered upon the duties and the sufferings of the week in which He died for the salvation of the world; and by it He gave notice, if one may so say, to the faithful and to mankind at large, of what He was about to do and to suffer. It is the solemn introduction to the week which follows, and it anticipates, but with due reserve, the solemn tragedy which it thus introduces. It was at once a procession and a pilgrimage. A procession in which the living Christ was the central figure, preceded and followed by an enthusiastic multitude of His faithful followers,

carrying their olive and walnut branches, waving their palm branches festooned with myrtle, and hymning the Master in language denoting deeply moved religious feelings of thankfulness and love. "'Hosanna! Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest!" It was a pilgrimage made in accordance with Jewish law which required all the children of Israel to come up to the Holy City for the Paschal Feast. A pilgrimage in which the true Paschal Lamb was coming to be slain for our sins, and, as He moved along the slopes of the hills and caught that first sight of the city, He wept to think of the tremendous consequences of that pilgrimage, yet may He not have found some joy as He looked into the future and saw the pious pilgrims in the ages to follow, who would come and call up with profound religious emotion that memorable and never-to-be-forgotten scene of His Crucifixion?

Processions and pilgrimages, sacred and secular, are as ancient as the race itself. The Israelites carried the Ark of the Covenant in solemn procession around the walls of Jericho. The priests carried the same ark of the Lord and the tabernacle of the Covenant to the newly built temple, while King Solomon and all the multitude of Israel went before the ark. The victorious generals of the old pagan world were received with triumphal processions on their return from a successful campaign; nor was the religious part of the ceremony forgotten. The Jews were accustomed to make pilgrimages on the three principal solemnities of the year. On the Paschal Feast, the Feast of Tabernacles and the Feast of Weeks, all the sons of Israel were obliged by the law to go up to the temple at Jerusalem. We read of the pagans making pilgrimages to their different oracles and to their various sacred groves and temples.

Processions and pilgrimages are not new. And in fostering and encouraging them by making processions part of the liturgy and by granting special indulgences and privileges to pilgrims, the Church's object is to set before us more vividly certain events in Our Lord's life, or certain doctrines of the faith, and thus to confirm our belief and strengthen us in the practise of virtue.

The procession of Palm Sunday, that on the Feast of Corpus Christi and at the Forty Hours' Devotion are all familiar to you as forming part of the ritual of the Church everywhere. We might mention those of Holy Week, the Rogation days, of the Holy Name, and the ones at Confirmation and First Communion, but all are acquainted with these. There is not one but has some knowledge of

the famous places of pilgrimage which are visited year in and year out by devout Catholics—the Holy Land, with its many sacred spots, the tombs of the Apostles in Rome, and the many noted shrines of the Blessed Mother.

Most interesting would it be to recount the story of Israel's processions and note the place of her pilgrimages; or to dwell on those of the early Church when the persecuted Christians bore the bodies of their martyred brethren in lowly pomp to the catacombs; or to speak of the work accomplished by St. Chrysostom in counteracting the public ceremonies of the Arians, by instituting solemn public processions in which kings and emperors participated with the people in songs of praise as they followed the Cross of Christ. Absorbingly interesting, too, is the history of the various shrines visited year after year by pious and reverent Catholics. To go over the ground from the time of the first pilgrims to the spot of the Crucifixion and burial of Our Lord to the great pilgrim crusades to recover the Holy Sepulchre, and from them to the present-day pilgrimages, inspired by the same love and loyalty, would be most gratifying. But the spirit of these things concerns us at present, the fact that they are an open, public profession of faith, a purely religious exercise, and, above all, a means of developing enthusiasm for our holy religion.

The great procession and pilgrimage of Palm Sunday, which we spoke of in the beginning, was marked with a religious character. The multitudes that had gathered around Him before were animated, to a degree by selfishness; His discourses were unusual in their soul-stirring, soul-forming truths; He had fed these people when they hungered in the desert; He had blessed their children, healed their diseases, raised their dead. But now it is not the usual self-seeking gathering, their whole bearing is different. There are all the signs of enthusiasm for the person of the Master himself. Their hymn of praise is from the 117th Psalm. The words had long been used at the Feast of Tabernacles and at the Passover. They were connected in the minds of pious Jews with the coming of the Messias. And so as the mingled company from Bethany and Jerusalem advanced down the slope of the Mount of Olives toward the gates of the sacred city, they surrounded Christ with actions that showed their religious emotions were stirred. "Hosanna! Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest." There was that in Jesus which compelled this expression

of religious fervor. That union of tenderness and strength, of lowliness and of majesty, of sternness and of love, of weakness and of power, struck these men as unlike anything they had ever seen, aroused their admiration and enkindled their devotion. So Christ is the central idea of our processions whether He himself be there in the most holy Eucharist or whether He be represented by His blessed mother or His saints.

They start from the altar of Christ, the mainspring of all grace for us. The Cross is there leading the way and inviting us to follow in the footsteps of Our Lord here that we may reign with Him hereafter; the banners signify that we are soldiers of Christ, warriors who must fight under His colors and in His cause; the lights tell us that He is the light of the world, "a light to the revelation of the Gentiles," the bridegroom for whose coming we must be ready with the burning lamps of charity and good works; they who participate walk two and two, showing that we must dwell in charity and brotherly love one with the other. The processions return to the Church to show that on earth we must enter the house of Christ if we would enter His home in heaven. Christ is the beginning, the center and the end of it all.

Why these pilgrimages to shrines of the saints and of the blessed Mother but to bring us all nearer to Christ? Why the visits to the Holy Father, to the tombs of the Apostles Peter and Paul, but to show our fealty, our love, our reverence, for them as the successors of the divine Father of us all, the great High Priest and Apostle of our confession—Jesus. Why visit the catacombs, and the places rendered sacred by the blood of martyrs, and holy by the consecrated lives of confessors and virgins, if it be not to bring us closer to Him for whom they lived, for whom they died? The words of Dr. Johnson illustrate this feeling and devotion which we have for holy places. Speaking of Iona, in his "Journey to the Western Islands of Scotland," he says: "We are now treading that illustrious island which was once the luminary of the Caledonian regions, whence savage bands and roving barbarians derived the benefits of knowledge and the blessings of religion. Far from me and from my friends be such frigid philosophy as may conduct us indifferent and unmoved over any ground which has been dignified by wisdom, bravery or virtue. That man is little to be envied whose patriotism would not gain force upon the plains of Marathon, or whose piety would not grow warm among the ruins of Iona." And who shall

fathom the unspeakable emotion of them who are fortunate enough to visit the holy city of Jerusalem? The city of which royal David sang, and for which the exiles by the waters of Babylon had yearned with such deep emotion when they took their harps from the willows to wail the remorseful dirge that they would remember her till their right hands forgot their cunning. What a moment of deep happiness and strong religious emotion is theirs as they kneel where His precious blood dyed the ground, and cling in spirit with Magdalene to that saving Cross and look up into His forgiving eye and say to Him: "Lord, I did crucify thee; I drove those hard nails into thee, my sins twisted those thorns around thee; I despised thy blood shed for me; yet despise me not, O Lord, despise me not; but wash me, cleanse me, keep me like the penitent near thee."

The spirit of religion, and it alone, must be dominant in them who share in these exercises. Let them be participated in in a spirit of thankfulness to God for favors received, of reverence and love for the Almighty to whom we owe all things, of sorrow and penance for offences against the Holy Spirit. Otherwise, there is no grace to be gained, no divine aid to be expected. It was said of old: "The more a pilgrim the less a saint," and the saying applied to those who had missed the true spirit of these works of piety. The kernel of the nut is in St. Jerome's words: "It is no great praise to have seen Jerusalem, but it is very great praise to have offered pious and devout prayers within its walls."

He who shares, with a proper spirit, in these pious acts, makes a public profession of his faith and adopts the means of giving it renewed life and vigor. The reason for it is very simple. It is the result of the nature which God has given us. We have been made social beings. Our nature is such that we are fitted for companionship one with another. More than this, God has endowed us with qualities and dispositions whose well-being demands this companionship. We are the units, the individual units, that go to make up the masses of men. And it is when we come together in great numbers that this social nature of ours most strongly asserts itself. It is then that we forget ourselves as individuals, and become component parts of a great acting mass.

There is a contagion of sympathy in masses of associated men—a contagion of passion—almost a contagion of thought. Mind beats in unison with mind, heart with heart, will with will; under the strain and compulsion of a common end to be attained. Private

feelings, strong resolutions, like reeds before the wind, go down under the imperious ascendency of this common enthusiasm and a multitude moves as a single body, animated by a single soul, with a single directness and intensity of purpose toward its goal. This sense of association is the soul and strength of all powerful corporate action among men. It is the spirit which gives power to the public assembly, moved and aroused by the thrilling eloquence and throbbing feeling of the orator. It is the soul of an army in battle. For when the air vibrates with excitement, man becomes intoxicated with courage, and a common soldier does deeds that would grace a hero of Olympus. It was this enthusiasm arising from a sense of association among the members of a great assembly of men, which Our Lord took into His service on Palm Sunday. He is the Lord of hearts and wills, who knows what is in man and can control it, and who bids the uncertain and surging currents of feeling in a mixed multitude to minister to His glory.

Now, in her processions and in her pilgrimages, the Church lays under tribute the results arising from this same sense of association. We feel that we do not stand, like Moses, alone in the awful presence of God, that we are not alone face to face with the Almighty. Each worshiper knows himself to be engaged in a work to which all around him are, in their measure, devoting themselves. If his thoughts and affections are, first of all, as they must be, directed upon God, they are also entwined by sympathy with the affections and the thoughts of those around him; and in this felt communion of each with all and of all with each lies the strength and the soul of these public acts of worship, for from it springs a new impulse, a new life-giving influence to our religious fervor. To it was granted, of old, that uncanceled, and we know irrevocable, charter, "where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them."

There are those who will scoff at and condemn these things, for each man nowadays has his own narrow prescription for the spiritual improvement of his fellowmen. Remember there were carping and envious Pharisees mingling with the enthusiastic crowd on Palm Sunday and they are around our processions and pilgrimages to-day. One hour of bright sunshine is more cheering than a cloud-bound sky with a freezing temperature. If our faith and our zeal be enkindled by that love of Christ, by that deep sense of the certainty, the importance, the necessity of the truths of the

Gospel, by that sense of association with a multitude of men who are engaged in serving and praising God, who are they that shall object? The wind of His compassion bloweth where it listeth, and its heavenly action is beyond the scope both of our criticism and our approval. Mingle in spirit, if not in body with the pilgrims to the Holy Land or to Rome, take part in the processions of Corpus Christi, the Forty Hours, and the Holy Name, catch a spark of the enthusiasm such as animated the throng of the first Palm Sunday. We want more of this genuine religious enthusiasm in our busy modern world. The vast majority of men to-day are giving too unreservedly of their best thought and energy to the engrossing but passing concerns of sense and time. Little do they realize what a blessing it is to escape for an hour from the prison-house of matter out into the warming, soothing atmosphere of God's love. Miss no opportunity of breathing in the atmosphere of this enthusiasm, it will go out from you as the virtue went out from Christ himself. It is not an end but a means to an end, a means of letting our light shine before men, of thus bringing them and ourselves nearer to Christ. Like the flood-tide it will ebb and flow, it will most assuredly recede, and, therefore, the best must be made of it while it lasts. It is that zeal, that divine zeal of which Our Lord said: "I am come to cast fire on the earth and what will I but that it be kindled." Let it take your spirit into its invigorating, enwrapping flames, for, "thou child shall be called the prophet of the Most High, thou shalt go before the face of the Lord to prepare His ways, to give knowledge of salvation to His people unto the remission of sins, to enlighten them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to direct their feet into the way of peace."

# XLVIII. FASTING, ALMS, WORKS OF CHARITY

BY THE RIGHT REV. JOHN S. VAUGHAN, D.D.

"Wherefore, brethern, labor the more by good works to make your calling and election sure, for doing these you shall not sin at any time; for so an entrance shall be ministered to you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ."—II Peter, i, 10-11.

*SYNOPSIS.—Introduction.—Working with and for God. Parable of the laborers in the vineyard. All who work not for God are idle. Are we really workers in Christ's vineyard? The soul of each, the vineyard in which God calls him to labor.*

*I. (a) Preparation of the soil, effected by fasting. Sin to be plucked up by the roots, little use in cutting down bad weeds if roots are left in ground. Sins of the flesh especially the bad weeds of our corrupt nature. Man part beast, part angel: if you feed the beast, you starve the angel. (b) Fasting not only a preventive of sin, but a satisfaction for past sins. Scripture words and instances. To be wholesome, fasting must be based on obedience. (c) Fasting also uplifts the mind and fits it for contemplation.*

*II. Pruning away of what is superfluous. Love of our neighbor visible token of our love of God. Without love of God benefactions to one's neighbor but dead works. Philanthropy versus Christian charity. That the counterfeit of this. At best the love of man for man's sake—not the love of man for God's sake. Christian charity as broad as the world; knows no distinction of color, class, or creed.*

*III. Special works of Christian charity, alms-giving. Alms spiritual and corporal. Efficacy of alms as means of grace. How to give alms. Effect of alms-giving.*

*Conclusion.—One more glance at our parable. Hours mark periods in life of individual. Seasons of grace. Tide in affairs of the soul, "taken at the flood," leads on to life eternal.*

It is a divinely revealed truth that God wills the salvation of all men. But, as St. Augustine reminds us, He who made men without their own coöperation will not save them without it. Coöperation means working together. "My Father worketh until now," says Our Lord, "and I work" (John v, 17). We must work with God and for God, if we would attain what the Apostle calls "the prize of our high calling in Christ Jesus." We are laborers in the vineyard of Christ, and only by faithful and persevering labor can we earn our reward. This great practical truth Our Lord brings home to us by means of the parable of the laborers in the vineyard. The master of the vineyard, who is no other than Our Lord himself, goes out early in the morning and again at the third hour, the sixth, the ninth, the

eleventh, or hour before the last of the day, to hire laborers for His vineyard; and at each hour that He goes out He finds men standing idle. How is this? Are there so many idle people in the world, and is it only the idle that God calls? No, there are not so very many idle people, in one sense. To be idle is to be doing nothing, and the people of the world are, for the most part, very busy indeed. But they are busied about worldly things; they are working for the world, for themselves; they are not working with God and for God. These are the idle persons that God is calling, ever calling, to labor in His vineyard. "Why stand you here all the day idle?" Idle they are in very truth who work not for the salvation of their souls. Men may have the name of being industrious, but if the fruit of all their industry is some temporal good, their labor is lost; they are simply idling their time.

The question that we must put to ourselves is this: Are we really workers in the vineyard of Christ? Or to put it in another way, Do we really set more store on life eternal than we do on worldly things, the riches, and honors, and comforts of this life? Amid our anxiety about many things—for some thought we must give to the things of the world while we live in the world—do we ever keep clearly and steadily in view that there is but one thing necessary? And do we make it the first and supreme business of our lives to secure that one thing necessary? If we do we may know that we are not idle, that we really are working in the Master's vineyard. That vineyard we are not to conceive of as a place hedged in from the world, where the workers are apart from the rest of men and all by themselves. "The kingdom of God is within you," says the Master. The soul of each man is the vineyard in which God calls him to labor. This is the soil he has to till; in tilling this he has to bear the burden and heat of the day, that when the evening cometh he may receive his reward.

There are two things in particular that the laborer in the vineyard must attend to. The first is a careful preparation and tillage of the soil, in order to root out from it and keep it free from shrubs and noxious weeds that may impede the growth of the vine. Then, when the clustered grapes are full grown, he must prune away the shading leaves that the warm sun may bring the fruit to luscious ripeness. So, in the spiritual vineyard, there is a process of preparation and tillage of the soil, and a process of ripening. Let us first consider the former of the two.

Preparation of the soil, in the spiritual order, is effected by fasting. This is one main way in which fasting is a means of grace. It is a means by which the soul is prepared for the reception of grace and freed from the evil passions that stifle the growth of virtue. And it is by all odds the most effective means. In order to secure a thorough amendment of life it is needful to pluck up sin by the roots. Evil weeds grow apace, and, as long as their roots remain in the soil, will continue to grow. The man who is sorry for his sins and confesses them receives pardon. But if he takes no steps to remove the roots of sin that remain in the form of evil habits, the purpose of amendment implied in his sorrow for sin is almost sure to be fruitless. The old evil passions of his nature will resume their former sway. It is of little use cutting down bad weeds if you leave their roots in the ground; they will be sure to sprout again. This is especially true of sins of the flesh, which are pre-eminently the bad weeds of our corrupt nature. As men we are part beast and part angel; if we feed the beast fat, we starve the angel. The only way to develop what is best in us, the spiritual, the angelic element of our nature, is to starve, or at any rate to refrain from feeding overmuch, the bestial element. Hence, it is that the Apostle (II Cor. vi, 5, 6) couples "fastings" with "chastity," for without mortification of the flesh the angelic virtue can hardly, if at all, be cultivated.

Not only is fasting a radical cure and preventive of sin for the future; it is also, in an eminent degree, a satisfaction for past sins. It is a great and powerful means of appeasing the anger of God and wiping out the debt of temporal punishment that normally remains due after the guilt of sin is forgiven. "Be converted to me with all your heart," saith the Lord by the mouth of the Prophet Joel, "in fasting, and in weeping, and in mourning. And rend your hearts, and not your garments, and turn to the Lord your God, for He is gracious and merciful, patient and rich in mercy, and ready to repent of the evil. Who knoweth but he will return, and forgive, and leave a blessing behind him, sacrifice and libation to the Lord your God. Blow the trumpet in Sion, sanctify a fast." By fasting the people of Nineveh turned away the anger of God that had been kindled against them because of their sins; by fasting the royal Psalmist "humbled" his "soul" (Ps. xxxiv, 13), and so satisfied the justice of God; by fasting, in every age of the world, great sinners expiated their sins and were restored to God's friendship and even

to a higher degree of grace than that whence they had fallen. But the fast to be wholesome and fruitful must be undertaken in the right spirit, in the spirit of penance, in the spirit of humility, in conformity with the mind and will of the Church. "Behold in the day of your fast," said God to His people, by the Prophet Isaias, "your own will is found" (*Ibid.* lviii, 3). It profits little to mortify the flesh if the spirit be not mortified. It is the obedient man, as the Scripture says, that speaks of victory. The fast, therefore, which is best and most wholesome is that which is kept in obedience to the laws of the Church, for in it the will of God and not our own is surely found.

A third effect of fasting is to lift up the mind above the things of earth and fit it for the contemplation of heavenly things. For three weeks the Prophet Daniel fasted before he saw the vision by the River Tigris and received a revelation from God (*Ibid.* v, 10). After eating the bread baked in the ashes, Elias abstained from food for forty days, and then had the vision on Horeb, the mount of God (III Kings, 19). So we, if we would ascend the mountain of prayer and gaze upon eternal truths, must purify our souls by fasting.

I have said that the laborer in the vineyard, when the grapes are now full grown, must begin to cut away the broad leaves of the vine in order to admit the ripening rays of the sun. What is there that corresponds to this process in the vineyard of the soul? It is the action of brotherly love or charity as manifested especially in alms-giving. Charity is the very soul of the good works by which we are bidden to make our calling and election sure. It is the sun that brightens and warms and makes fruitful the spiritual vineyard in which we are called to labor; for God is charity, and He is the sun of our souls. Now the love of our neighbor, as shown forth by what are known as works of charity, is the visible token and proof that the love of God reigns in our hearts. "If any man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar," says the Apostle of love. "For he that loveth not his brother, whom he seeth, how can he love God, whom he seeth not" (I John iv, 20). And again: "He that hath the goods of this world, and seeth his brother in need, and withholdeth his compassion from him, how doth the love of God abide in him?" (*Ibid.* iii, 17). The love of God is the one true source of the love of one's neighbor. If the love of God does not abide in a man, his benefactions to his neighbor, be they ever so splendid in the eyes of the world, lack

the principle of life, and are but dead works. They are like Dead Sea fruit,* pleasing to the eye, but bitter to the taste and noxious, for they serve but to nourish pride and self-complacency. Or, to follow the similitude of the vineyard, which is more to the purpose, they are like clusters of green grapes covered over with a profusion of leaves through which the ripening sun can never send its rays.

The world to-day sets great store by philanthropy. Humanitarianism is a cult with a few, and a fad with the many. Let us beware of this counterfeit which passes with men of the world for Christian charity. It looks genuine, but it rings false. Its worth is on the surface merely; inwardly it lacks the element that alone can give it sterling value. It is, at best, the love of man for man's sake; it is not the love of man for God's sake. "If I should give all my goods to feed the poor, and my body to be burnt," says St. Paul, "and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing. Charity is patient, is kind; charity envieth not, dealeth not perversely, is not puffed up, is not ambitious, seeketh not her own" (I Cor. xiii, 2-4). The hidden spring of philanthropy, as distinguished from Christian charity, is the love of self, in one or other of its many forms. It is only when we look upon our fellow-man with eyes of faith, and see in him the image and likeness of God and a brother in Jesus Christ, that we can love him as ourselves for God's sake, which is Christian charity.

True beneficence, whence proceed the works of charity, has its source in the love of God above all things for His own sake and of one's neighbor as oneself for God's sake. Its maxim and guiding principle is in these words of the Apostle: "And in doing good, let us not fail. For in due season we shall reap, if we fail not. Therefore, while we have time, let us do good to all men, but especially to those that are of the household of the faith" (Gal. vi, 9, 10). Christian charity is as broad as the world, and reaches as far as the race of men. It knows no distinction of color, or class, or creed, save only that its first duty is toward those that are of the household of the faith. "For," as the same Apostle says, "if any man provideth not for his own, and especially his own household, he

*"There is in the desert (about the Dead Sea), growing on the little hillocks, a 'vine,' much like a melon-vine for foliage, and bearing a fruit the size of a lemon, which is lovely to look at, but death to taste, as all Bedouin know; and well I remember their horror when they saw me gather some, thinking I was about to eat them! This fruit has a thick skin, and inside is full of pips, which are *very* bitter."—"The Bible and Modern Discoveries," 4th ed., pp. 18-19.

hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel" (I Tim. v, 8). It has its model in Him who "went about doing good," and who has taught us in the parable of the good Samaritan that our neighbor is every one who is in need of our good offices.

The special work of Christian charity is alms-giving. Whatever is done out of compassion for God's sake to relieve those that are in need is, in a true sense, an alms. This is so great a means of grace that it is reckoned as one of the three keys of the kingdom of heaven, the other two being fasting and prayer. Our neighbor's needs may be corporal or spiritual, and so alms-giving embraces both the spiritual and corporal works of mercy. And as it is a greater and better work to relieve the needs of the soul, by so much as the soul is itself better and more precious than the body, so the giving of spiritual alms, the performance of the spiritual works of mercy, is far more meritorious than the giving of corporal alms. Hence, it is written that "those who instruct many unto justice," which is foremost among the spiritual works of mercy, "shall shine as stars unto all eternity" (Dan. xii, 3). But it is not every one who can instruct the ignorant, or counsel the doubtful, or comfort the sorrowful, or win back the sinner from the error of his ways, which are the chief spiritual works of mercy, though all can and ought to bear wrongs patiently, to forgive injuries, and to pray for the living and the dead, which are the last three of those seven works. On the other hand, any one who has somewhat more of this world's goods than he himself needs, can, in the measure that he has more, feed the hungry, give drink to the thirsty, clothe the naked, and shelter the homeless, which are the first four of the corporal works of mercy; while any one who is able to go about can visit the sick, visit those that are in prison, and bury the dead, which are the last three. To the merit of these works, to their efficacy as a means of grace, we have solemn testimony from the lips of Our Lord himself. "I was hungry," He says in describing the last judgment, "and you gave me to eat; thirsty, and you gave me drink; a stranger, and you took me in; naked, and you clothed me; sick, and you visited me; in prison, and you came to me. Then shall the just answer him, saying, Lord, when did we see thee hungry, and fed thee? thirsty, and gave thee drink? And when did we see thee a stranger and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee? Or when did we see thee sick, or in prison, and came to thee? And the King shall answer, and say to them, Verily, I say unto you,

inasmuch as you did it to one of these my brethren even the least, you did it to me" (Matt. xxv, 35-40). He also teaches us how we are to give alms so as to merit the reward of eternal life: "Take heed that thou put not thy justice before men, to be seen of them; else thou shalt not have a reward of your Father who is in heaven. Therefore, when thou doest an alms-deed, sound not a trumpet before thee, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may be honored by men; verily, I say to you, they have received their reward. But when thou doest alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth, that thy alms may be in secret; and thy Father, who seeth in secret, will repay thee" (Matt. vi, 2-4). By giving alms of our worldly goods, by pruning away what is superfluous, what is over and above our own needs, we laborers in Christ's vineyard make the sun of God's love shine upon all our works till they become ripe with merit for life eternal.

Let us now glance once more, in concluding, at the parable of the Master, which is so fraught with meaning for us. The early morn, the third hour, the sixth, the ninth, the eleventh, are commonly understood of the different epochs in the history of man since the creation; but they may also be understood of the different periods in the life of the individual from the cradle to the grave. Some are called to labor in the vineyard in the early morn of life, some in youth, some in manhood, some when the sun of life is now far past the meridian, while some few stand without idle the livelong day, and are bidden to enter when the shadows are falling. There are seasons of grace, turning-points of man's existence, when God speaks clearly and strongly to his soul, bidding him to have done with worldliness and sin, to redeem the past, or again to aim at something higher than the mere keeping of himself just within the territory of grace.

> There is a tide in the affairs of men
> Which, taken at the flood, leads on to fortune;
> Omitted, all the voyage of their life
> Is bound in shallows and in miseries.

When God calls, the tide in the affairs of the soul is at the flood, and if taken then leads surely on to life eternal. The call of God may come more than once, but once at least it comes for all. "This day if you hear his voice, harden not your hearts." The Master calls you to-day to labor in His vineyard. "Why stand you here all

the day idle?" Now is the acceptable time, now is the day of salvation. The night cometh when no man can labor. Heed, then, God's call, while yet it is day, and haste by good works to make your calling and election sure; for so an entrance shall be ministered to you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

## XLIX. THE INNER LIFE

BY THE RIGHT REV. BISHOP JAMES BELLORD, D.D.

"Man seeth those things that appear, but the Lord beholdeth the heart." —I Kings xvi, 7.

*SYNOPSIS.—I. The two departments of human life—the relation and content of each—the importance of each.*

*II. Special importance of the inner life. Scripture on this point. Special care required in the examination of conscience with regard to thoughts. Importance of inner life because of its relation to the external life. The inner spirit the criterion of the value of an act.*

*III. This is exemplified in our Lord's life, in that of Mary His Mother, in the life of the saints, and applies to our own life. Hence God judges by the heart, and His judgment differs from that of the world. The folly of rash judgment, since man cannot know his fellowman's heart.*

*IV. Necessity of cultivating the inner life. Christ is our Model. Refinement is not religion—often the cloak of an evil life. Truth, solidity and consistency distinctive of the religious character. God's work can be done in any and every station of life. Imitation of the virtues of the Sacred Heart leads to Christian perfection.*

I. There are two departments of human life and action, the external and the internal. One comprises words and bodily actions, which appear outwardly; the other, our thoughts, dispositions of mind, good or evil impulses, motives and intentions. The external life is not independent of the internal, but proceeds from it, and is accompanied by it. If for any reason the external action is not guided by the internal, it does not reckon as a human action, it does not fall within the reach of the moral law, it is not a responsible act, is neither good nor bad, and can not be punished or rewarded. Such are the actions of infants, somnambulists, lunatics. The real human life is that which is within. Consciousness, knowledge of good and evil, the freedom of choosing whether we shall do a thing or omit it, the calculation of the effects of our actions, and the disposing of them so as to gain certain objects, these are all actions of the invisible soul; these determine our outward actions; these are what give them their special character and make them different from the acts of irresponsible animals. The inward action, unlike the outer, is complete in itself. The calculation and determination of the mind, even though not carried into external effect by word or

deed, is a responsible action and deserving of blame or praise. Outward acts are only part of a human and moral action; they are the complement, the manifestation, the effect, of the all-important inward action.

Our exterior actions, though of less importance, are more prominent than the interior ones. They are all that other men can take cognizance of. Some are in themselves good, some bad, some may be one or the other, according to the disposition of mind they proceed from. As a general rule, they afford some clue as to the inner disposition of a man, but this is far from always being the case. Very often the motive is not so good as the action, it may be positively bad; but this we can not penetrate; so we have to take the deeds of men generally according to their apparent, and not according to their real, value. Human laws have to deal with that which is visible; the invisible remains beyond their control. Motives, intentions, thought, can not be commanded by human law or punished.

As a consequence of this, many men treat the external life as if it were the most important. If their minds are set on this world, and if they look at things practically, as they say, they see that their gain, or their good name, or their comfort in life, depend on their outward and visible life before men, and that inward excellence either is not noticed, or proves an obstacle to, or, in short, does not pay in proportion to the trouble of cultivating it. The best of such men are contented with aspiring to respectability, as distinguished from sound and thorough goodness; they practise exterior virtues such as happen to be popular in the class that they belong to; they show just so much justice and benevolence toward others as will secure consideration for themselves and respect for their own rights; in short, all the goodness they do is done so that it may be seen by men. As for the inner human life, it is a popular axiom that "Thought is free." It is so, but only in a limited sense. It is free from the investigations of men; for none have the power to read the secret of thought, no authority can issue a warrant of search, no legislature has enacted laws about our thoughts, no force can compel a man to change his opinions and his desires; there is no temporal penalty for inward revolt or crime. God himself has "left man in the hand of his own counsel, . . . that which he shall choose shall be given him" (Eccli. xv, 14, 18). Yet we have no such thing as uncontrolled sovereignty over that kingdom which

is within us. Our thoughts are open before the eye of God, every one is noted, and will be one day rewarded or punished. Our minds and hearts are not emancipated from duties to God and to our neighbor; they are bound by the moral law and subject to heavy responsibility. Thought is, in a sense, less free than action; as it is more free from external restraint and more unruly, it requires more constant watchfulness and more rigid restraint; and, as it is the source of all external action, it requires a more careful training.

II. The inner life of man is so much more important than the outer as its events are so much more numerous. Our exterior actions are limited in their range, sometimes but few in a day, or extended over a length of time, and not very various in their kinds. But for one good action or one bad action there may have been hundreds of distinct movements of the will; during one protracted piece of work ideas and desires innumerable may have been rushing through our minds. How often it happens that a man's external life leaves many of his faculties unemployed until some casual opportunity gives them play. But they have worked secretly. We are struck by some heroic deed or shocked by the sudden fall of one who has hitherto stood well. We do not understand it; it seems so inconsistent with the past. Yet it is not an isolated fact; it is one of many. It is only the visible production of a virtue that has long been forming, or of a sin which has already become a habit through repeated acts of the will. It is only in the record of his inner life that a man's whole history is written, and all the elements of his character do their work. It is chiefly in the recesses of his mind that the battle between good and evil is fought out. That is where Satan exerts all his power of temptation and often gains a consent to the thought which is refused to the action. It is there exclusively that the last decisive struggle which precedes death takes place, of which the issue is final perseverance or final impenitence.

Many are blind to the importance of thought for good and ill, through forgetting that the internal bears precisely the same character as the external act, even though that should never become a reality. In the mere intention or in the delight in a thought there is present all that makes the action either virtuous or sinful; and it may even happen that the clearer understanding and the greater intensity of the will's adhesion may make the mere thought in one man a greater virtue or a greater sin than the outward action would be in another. Scripture frequently speaks of the great malice of evil

thoughts. "Perverse thoughts separate from God . . . for wisdom will not enter into a malicious soul" (Wis. i, 3, 4). "Evil thoughts are an abomination to the Lord" (Prov. xv, 26). And one of the six things which the Lord hateth is "a heart that deviseth wicked plots" (Prov. vi, 18). Again St. John tells us that "Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer" (I John iii, 15). And Our Lord says that he who is angry is in danger of the same judgment as was awarded to those who killed, and that "whosoever shall look on a woman to lust after her hath already committed adultery" (Matt. v, 21, 27). On the other hand, we may gain immense merit for good desires which we have not the means of fulfilling. The Prophet Daniel was commended by the angel because he was a man full of desires. Before God, therefore, the will is as good as the deed, provided it be a real and earnest will, and not one of those vain desires which "kill the slothful," inasmuch as he substitutes them for actual deeds. "He longeth and desireth all the day long," but "his hands have refused to work at all" (Prov. xxi, 25, 26). St. Augustine says: "Whatsoever thou dost wish and canst not do, God takes as done." St. Paul in like manner says: "If the will be forward it is accepted according to that which a man hath, and not according to that which he hath not" (II Cor. viii, 12); that is, it is accepted according to his intention, and not according to the limitation of his ability. From all this we may gather the necessity of special care in the confession of sins of thought. We can not lump them all together and say that we have had bad thoughts simply, any more than we can say, "I have done bad deeds, I have broken the commandments." But we must investigate them separately and acknowledge them specifically as sins of pride, or rash judgment, or hatred, or peevishness, with their number and circumstances, just as if they were sins of deed or word.

Besides the importance which the inner life has, on account of its own merits and demerits, it has an additional importance as being the source of external life. As soon as the action of the soul takes an outward form it begins a new term of life, it affects ourselves in new ways, it gives birth to long-enduring consequences in other men and in the world generally. By our good deeds we give comfort and example to others, we help in saving their souls and so glorify God. By our sins we disturb the external order of the universe, injure other men, give scandal, weaken our own souls, give greater strength to bad habits, and move God to wrath. The

inner character of men's souls is the tree from which proceeds the fruit of external action. If the tree be good the fruit will be good; if the tree be bad the fruit will be bad. Appearances may sometimes be deceptive, but the bad tree can not produce really good fruit, nor the good tree bad fruit. Concerning sinful actions Our Lord says: "From within out of the heart of man proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness. All these evil things come forth from within and defile a man" (Mark vii, 21-23). Concerning goodness of life the Psalmist tells us: "All the glory of the king's daughter is from within" (Ps. xliv, 14). Our repentance for sin, too, must begin with the interior, for the prophet says: "Be converted to me with all your heart, in fasting, and in weeping, and in mourning. And rend your hearts and not your garments" (Joel ii, 12, 13).

The entire value, therefore, of our actions depends on the inner spirit from which they proceed. Certain acts are in themselves good, such as adoration of God or beneficence toward our fellowmen. To human observers they seem equally good in all cases; they are always a good example, or they bring equal relief to suffering, whatever the motive which has prompted them. We can not see their motive in other men or take account of it. But God sees the heart, and in His sight the same action will bear a very different value, according to the dispositions of the heart. The external appearance of an act is not an infallible index of its meritoriousness. The malice or the merit is from the soul alone, and that God sees. A hundred men may do the same action, and it may be different as to its merit in each case. One man may do it in the spirit of faith; in another man it does not proceed from faith, and so can not please God supernaturally. One man may have done it from self-interest, another out of habit, one man grudgingly, and another with a whole heart, and in another man's case it may only be a small portion of what God has demanded from him. That which seems piety to us may only be hypocrisy, and an act of apparent generosity may be done out of selfish calculation. Many and many a good deed is spoiled by an insufficient or perverted intention. A thing good in itself may become positively offensive to God; and, on the other hand, a bad action may find excuse if it springs from ignorance and not from a malicious will, and a trivial service may be most meritorious. Thus the public observances of the Pharisees,

and their exactness about details of the law, being done out of ostentation, were hateful before God. So the widow's mite was a more pleasing offering than the large sums which the wealthy cast into the temple treasury. So Our Lord could ask forgiveness for His brutal executioners, because, unlike the priests and scribes, they knew not what they did. Caiphas prophesied under the influence of the Holy Spirit, but his prophecy, which was the word of God to his hearers and to us, was a crime in him, for he designed it to secure the judicial rejection of the Messias by his own people. Our Lord gave Himself into the hands of His enemies. Judas, too, gave Him up; but how different the intention and the merit in either case!

III. It was the inward principle that gave the value to Our Lord's actions. Most of His years were passed in childhood or in manual labor for the support of the household at Nazareth. His acts were those of ordinary Jews; His ministry no different from that of the Apostles. Of His miracles He said that His followers should work even greater ones; and thousands of martyrs have died like Him. But His acts were those of the Son of God; the smallest work of child-service that He rendered in domestic life proceeded from infinite self-sacrifice and infinite love, and so surpassed in an infinite degree all the united actions of angels in heaven and saints on earth. So, too, it was with Christ's most Blessed Mother. Though not called to the external functions of prophets, and apostles, and martyrs, and confessors, she is worthily the queen of all God's saints, and surpasses them all in her reward and in her power, because of the sublime perfection of her inner life. So it is also with the saints. Their glory is not in their miracles and prophecies, not in their labors and successors, not in their renown and undying memory, but in that which was the invisible source of all these things. So, too, our possibilities of fruitful work and great reward are not limited by our lowly position, or moderate talents, or absorbing worldly occupations, we might remain even as we are as to external life, and yet raise ourselves to an equality with canonized saints by the ardor of our faith and love.

When we compare together man with man, or age with age, or nation with nation, of whom the one lives the supernatural life of faith and the other the natural life of sense, it may seem sometimes that the worldly men run the spiritual pretty close in the matter of excellence. There is goodness in each, there is fault in each.

It may be that the deficiencies of the spiritual one are more obnoxious to current taste and fashion than the greater faults of the unspiritual; or that the more brilliant virtues of the unspiritual command more admiration than the more solid virtues of the spiritual one. And it may seem extraordinary that the one which appears superior should be under God's enmity and the other in God's favor. But here, too, God judgeth not according to the look of a man, but beholdeth the heart. The supernatural life which the one man or the one class possesses overrides all the natural excellence which the other has; and the inner life of faith and love makes the same actions infinitely more valuable in one than in the other. Their goodness may look much the same on the surface, but in the one case it is deeply rooted, while in the other it is merely superficial.

The internal element in human actions, that which is the most important factor in the formation of a correct judgment about them, is completely hidden from us. We can not safely draw conclusions from the little we can see, and, therefore, God forbids us to pass judgment on our neighbors. If we do so, we are assuming that we possess a knowledge which belongs to God alone, and we are arrogating to ourselves one of His supreme prerogatives, that of judge. We can not know for certain even our own position with God. We can hardly be sure of our own motives, we can hardly detect the insidious taint of vanity or uncharitableness which mingles with our best intentions. Much less can we read the motives of other men, or estimate their difficulties and their excuses, or compare their acts with the demands that God has made and the assisting grace He has given them. We must not dare to criticize the conduct of Providence toward men, the divine patience, or justice, or mercy. These operations are deeply hidden in each man's heart. It is enough for us to know that God's dealings with men are accommodated to their respective characters, and that He can take account of every circumstance, whether culpable or mitigating, that enters into each human action. We must remain in uncertainty about our own and other men's acts; and we must use that uncertainty in the spirit of charity, not depreciating or suspecting our neighbor's good deeds, but extenuating his evil ones and believing in his good intentions; while at the same time we take no credit from our good acts, and make no excuse for our sins.

IV. It is of the most urgent necessity to cultivate the inner life, and to mold our ideas and dispositions according to the model which

God has set before us in His only Son. The perfection of human action must begin from within and thence pass to our external life. Our relations with the outer world need to be guided by some constant and elevated principle of goodness; that is, by the mind of God impressing its likeness upon our mind. Without this we shall find ourselves, in many emergencies, unable to practise the high virtues which are required of us. Without this deep principle we shall allow ourselves to be guided by present expediency, and even if we do succeed in choosing a right course of action, its rectitude will be inconstant and superficial. Those whose souls are not duly regulated and disciplined under supernatural influence may often show considerable excellence in their actions; but they are guided by human fashion, or convenience, or selfishness even. Their good actions are like branches of a tree topped off and stuck in the ground; the leaves and flowers may look well for a short time, but there is no root to them and no sap, they are dying from the first and not really living. Goodness of deed which is not founded on goodness of soul is a hollow sham; it is a beautiful surface with no solid substance beneath. Such was the virtue of the Pharisees; it was external religion and internal impiety; their goodness was only a cloak for the concealment of their wickedness; the better it looked, the worse it really was; it was a sepulchre, white and ornamental without, but within full of the putrefaction of death.

Such is the goodness of a society which is refined but not religious. It may have many amiable and brilliant qualities, but its goodness exists for the age of man, and outside that range it ceases to be. The motives of the world's virtues, convenience or expediency, may to-morrow be the motive for the opposite vices. So, in the case of the natural virtues of the world, the presence of one affords no presumption as to the existence of any other virtue, and we can seldom depend on its permanence beyond the present moment. This is the judgment that the world passes on itself. And there is abundant evidence of its truth in those shocking disclosures which have become so common. As soon as temptation comes, as soon as the usual restraints are relaxed, at once everything like moral principle is flung to the winds. With too many the only barrier against the most shocking crimes is the absence of opportunity and the danger of detection; and the chief use they have for religion and regular living is to divert observation from their dishonesty and immorality.

Solidity, truth, and consistency mark the Christian as distinct from the worldly character. Our Master bids us "first make clean the inside of the cup and of the dish, that the outside may become clean" (Matt. xxiii, 26). And His Apostle, speaking of our duties to our fellowmen, says: "Not serving to the eye, as it were pleasing men, but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart. With a good will serving as to the Lord and not to men" (Ephes. vi, 6, 7). This is our rule. We have to take care that our outer and inner lives correspond. Our goodness must not be merely external, but it must exist equally in our heart as in our works. It must commence from within and take deep root in our souls, and thence it has to spread to our outer life and bring forth its fruits. We must cultivate the reality and not the appearance; we must strive to be and not to seem.

In order to attain to this reality, we must remember always that, whatever our occupation, we are doing God's work, and serving Him and not man. Whether we are engaged in domestic duties, or civic duties, or the duties of business, or even in recreation, we must bear ourselves as being in the presence of God, and as having to render to Him an account of every moment. We must be indifferent as to the opinions of men, as to their praise or blame, as to our own gain or loss, provided only we do the will of God and satisfy Him.

And finally, for the complete perfection of our inward life, "let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus" (Phil. ii, 5). We must imitate the spirit of Our Lord's inner life in order that we may be able to imitate His actions. Many of His external works are for our instruction and our admiration, but not for our imitation. His works of miraculous power, His exercise of divine authority, are not for us to copy; His apostolic life and His death of sorrow and disgrace are shared only by a few chosen ones; He led, indeed, a lowly domestic life for thirty years, but none of its incidents are recorded for our guidance. We must have recourse to His Sacred Heart, and from that we may learn the virtues which belong to every state of life—faith and love, humility and obedience, and patience, industry and contentment, devotion to God's glory, zeal for souls, courage, resignation, self-renouncement. These virtues of the Sacred Heart should be our constant meditation, so that we may be penetrated with the ideas and sentiments which Jesus had, in all the various circumstances of life, and may be able to act as

He would have acted. By the efficacy of this example, and by the dwelling of Christ in us by His grace and Sacraments, we shall arrive at the perfection of outward and of inward life. "The life also of Jesus" will "be made manifest in our mortal flesh" (II Cor. iv, 11), and as to our interior life we shall be able to say with truth, "I live, now not I, but Christ liveth in me" (Gal. ii, 20).

# L. THE SUPERNATURAL LIFE

BY THE RIGHT REV. BISHOP JAMES BELLORD, D.D.

"And that I live new in the flesh; I live in the faith of the Son of God."—Gal. ii, 20.

*SYNOPSIS.—There is order in all creation. Man's place in the universe. Divisions in the scale of life: i. e., the inorganic, the vegetative, sensitive, intellectual. The function of sense in the brute; reason the directive force in man; it furnishes also a rule of action, sufficient for the natural order.*

*II. Man is a supernatural being. The function of faith in this order. The elements of this order are: (1) truths to be known; (2) laws to be obeyed; (3) aid to the supernatural end; (4) an ideal to imitate.*

*III. The supernatural is vastly superior to the natural. This fact obscured in particular instances, but evident in general. This truth confirmed by analogy.*

*IV. The supernatural life necessary for the perfection and evolution of the human race. The mistake of trying to eradicate this higher life from the future generations. Natural faculties insufficient for the work of man. The principles of the supernatural life needed at the present time to destroy the evils of the age.*

I. The Almighty has filled the universe with an infinite variety of created beings. They rise gradually from the lowest level of dead matter up to the highest class who stand on the steps of God's throne, and are "made partakers of the divine nature" (II Pet. i, 4). Man is the compendium of creation. In a truer sense than the ancients conceived, he is a microcosm, the world in miniature. Standing midway between the higher and the lower life, he shares in each, united on the one side to the world of matter, on the other to the world of spirits. He belongs to this material world as its ruler and master; but the connection is superficial and temporary only. More truly, though imperceptibly, does he belong to the world of the angels, and this connection is eternal. Already it is said to him, "You are come to Mount Sion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to the company of many thousands of angels . . . and to the spirits of the just made perfect" (Heb. xii, 22, 23).

Let us descend the scale of life and trace it upward. Below all is the vast dead bulk of this earth, with its crust and its deep-lying

rocks, its seas and its internal fires. This is inorganic substance. Its motion is continual, but from forces external to itself. It has no inward principle of life and growth. Then there is a vast impassable gulf, and we find organic life in the vegetable kingdom. Here there is assimilation of other matter and growth, life, indeed, but no feeling or motion. Gradual steps lead us to the level of a still higher life. This is the animal kingdom. Here we find not only life, but action and motion under the guidance of sense. According to their bodily inclinations and the cravings of appetite, brute animals act, and desire, and seek what they need. When hungry they eat, when thirsty they drink, when weary they sleep. They have no ideas beyond these impulses of sense, no foresight, no knowledge of principles or of consequences. There is no such thing as choice, or freedom of action, or restraint of inclinations with a view to something else. Their instincts are irresistible. Hence, there is no law for them, no code of right and wrong, no merit or demerit, no reward or punishment; for they have no more intelligence as to their actions or power of ordering them than the stone which falls from the mountain top to its base. Sense, the lowest principle of action, is their only guide.

We cross another chasm, and we meet a being classed sometimes in the animal kingdom, but really forming a kingdom to himself, on account of his higher life. This is man; and the principle of his life, to include all in one word, is reason. Man is not an unthinking slave to the impulses of bodily wants. He knows what he is doing, he can calculate remote consequences; he can judge what is best to do, not merely what seems best to his bodily appetites at the present moment, but what will seem best at a future time, for others as well as for himself, and this for motives higher than mere sensual impulses. The power of choice, freedom of will, is correlative to intelligence. Knowledge of what is best to do would be a maimed and futile faculty without the power of choosing to do it. Man is not compelled to one course rather than another. God does not interfere with his full mastery over himself, or compel him to do what is best for him, *i. e.*, to serve God and save his own soul. Reason, too, furnishes a rule of action. It would suffice, even without revelation, to make known the existence of a god, the duty of worship, and some of the elements of God's natural law. Reason in the form of conscience shows that there is a difference between actions, that some are good and others evil; so that a man feels

shame or regret for certain actions; he recognizes that his inclination to them did not make them good deeds, that he deserves punishment and is bound to make atonement. Reason discloses many other laws—laws of health, laws of property, laws of justice, laws of respect for others and mutual aid, laws which promote good order and prosperity in the family, the tribe, the nation. The child, though his faculties are all undeveloped, is educated, not like the mere animal, through the senses, by finding its actions associated with a blow or a caress, but by appeals to his intelligence or his affection, his ideas or hopes, by being told of consequences and of his future interests. Reason is the principle of the higher intellectual life which distinguishes man from the beasts; and it would alone be a sufficient guide for him had he ever existed in the merely natural state without being elevated by revelation, faith and grace.

II. Divine Providence, however, did not intend to leave the human race in its state of mere nature. The function of mankind is not limited to ruling the world of creatures, enjoying the wealth of the soil, and developing its capabilities. Nor is it their sole function to get the greatest results out of their reason in art, science, philosophy, government, war. The life of man is not limited to the dictates of reason as the beasts are limited to the dictates of sense. The development of his intellectual faculties up to the highest attainable point falls as far short of the ideal proposed to him by God, as the cleverness of a troupe of performing dogs falls short of the intelligence of the average man.

There is a plane of life higher than the life of reason, and separated from it by a gulf as impassable as that which separates the inorganic from the organic being, the rose-bush from the horse, the dog from man, Dives in hell from Lazarus in Abraham's bosom; it is the sphere in which God exists and the blessed spirits. To belong to this is to participate in God's life, to be "partaker of the divine nature," to have Him united with the soul and dwelling in it. This higher divine life is something which surpasses man's natural requirements, desires, conceptions, capabilities. The guiding principle of this supernatural life, the source of vital action, corresponding to sense in the animal kingdom, and to reason in the merely natural human kingdom, is faith. As we participate in the animal life, the intellectual life, and the spiritual life, we have to be guided on due occasion by each of these three principles: by sense, at times, but in subordination to reason; by reason, at other times, but in

subordination to faith; and at times by faith alone without sight. The perfection and completeness of man, according to the divine ideal, consist in the due cultivation of each kind of life. By this he will attain to the highest development of his being and all his faculties, to his greatest happiness, his fullest utility, his highest dignity.

With a view to this higher life, God has given us faith, as channel of the perceptions, and as source of the vital actions, which belong to the supernatural life. Reason alone is unable to rise to the apprehension of supernatural truths and the practise of supernatural virtues; just as the instinct of animals will never bring them to understand the solar system or work out a problem in mathematics. Faith raises us into a realm of truths, of motives, of actions, of ideals, which, unaided, reason can never begin to comprehend.

The elements of the supernatural life are conveyed to us by faith, acting through an organization authorized by God—the Church. They are: 1. Truths to be known; the existence of God and His nature, the nature and destiny of our souls, our fallen state and the economy of redemption, the future life eternal for reward or punishment, the spiritual government by which God rules men on earth. These are more real to us than the impressions of sense or of reason, and far more important; they are strong incentives to action and a comfort in suffering; they are a new world in which we move unperceived by others. 2. Laws to obey. We are bidden to seek the next world rather than this, to submit our intellect to uncomprehended doctrines, to renounce our pleasures, to subvert the natural order and make the first last, *i. e.,* self, by means of humility, charity and obedience, to control all those natural impulses to which we are most strongly drawn. Here are motives directly contrary to those which sense and unaided reason give us. 3. Aids to strengthen us: prayer to the invisible and Sacraments whose outward aspects, as viewed by sense or mere reason, are inadequate to their great effects. 4. An ideal to imitate which sense and reason alone would reject. Our Lord Jesus Christ, not glorified but despised, suffering, degraded by the Cross, with no comeliness that we should desire Him. This ideal was a stumbling-block to the sensual Jews, foolishness to the keen intellect of the cultivated Greek, unmanly weakness to the stern race who ruled a hundred nations from the Capitol at Rome. Such is "the true light that enlighteneth every man that cometh into this world"; but which is enjoyed only by

those "who are born not of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God" (John i, 8, 13).

III. The spiritual or supernatural life is superior to the natural life of reason, as this is superior to the life of sense in the lower animals. It is not a difference of degree but of kind. It is impossible by natural means to pass from class to class; and religious faith is not a mere phase in the evolution of humanity. The superiority of faith, however, may often remain unseen, and the unregenerate man with merely natural faculties may seem superior to another who leads a spiritual life. It may be hard to realize that the spiritual man stands on a level so much higher. Faith sanctifies but it does not alter his natural faculties. It will not impart deep learning, critical power, tact in government, political position, wealth, skill in arms, a cultivated taste. The unspiritual man may cultivate his intellectual powers much more than the spiritual man. Nay, as talent and power tend to beget pride and alienate God; and as God delights to dwell with the lowly, the weak, and the ignorant, there is likely to be a very frequent superiority of the natural over the spiritual man. Nevertheless, in the long run, and on a large scale, the superiority of the spiritual life, even in the domain of reason, will assert itself; for the spirit of faith will secure, more effectually than mere intellect, those higher objects that man's life on earth demands; such as social order, refinement of mind and manners, disinterestedness, contentment, industry, respect for others, general morality and happiness.

The analogy of brute life and intelligent life will illustrate what has been said. The beasts in mere animal life are superior to man. The swiftness of the horse, the piercing glance of the eagle, the strength of the elephant, the endurance of the camel are not found in the intelligent being. Send him naked and unarmed into the desert, and he will die from the inclemency of the seasons and inability to provide himself with food. Set him to struggle empty-handed with tiger or bull or shark, and his intellect will avail him naught. Hardly any being is so weak, so incapable as man. But let him have time and material on which to exercise the power reason gives him, and he will master the universe. He will put forth a strength, a swiftness, an accuracy beyond those of beasts, and this by force of reason only, for his own physical powers remain unchanged. The higher faculty does in a better way the work which belongs to the lower. So also can spiritual faculties secure,

in a supernatural manner, the objects which belong more properly to the intellectual faculties. That which is a triumph of reason's power is attained with ease by those who work by faith. The distant ideal of the natural life is realized best through the supernatural.

IV. As a consequence, the supernatural life is not merely an ornamental or optional addition to the natural life, but it is necessary for the perfection, completeness, and full evolution of the human race. God has given us the aptitude, and created a place in our being for the supernatural, and we can not root it up or disregard it without detriment to our natural life. The man who refuses it has not brought himself down only to the normal level of natural humanity, as if he had never been raised from it, but to a far lower depth; in like manner, as a man losing the use of reason does not become like the beasts who never possessed it, but he is a ruined, a worthless object, useful in neither the intellectual nor the animal class. Humanity is a vast garden laid out in pastures, with beautiful plants carefully arranged, and the deep-rooted far-spreading tree of supernatural life in the midst. That garden would have been beautiful had the tree never been planted there; but, as it is there, it can not be torn up, with all its roots and fibers, from the earth without injuring and deranging the whole harmony and beauty of the garden. Those who reject the supernatural life are far worse off than if mankind had never been endowed with it. Grievous and fatal is the mistake of those who think to eradicate faith and the higher life from the coming generations of men, and who fancy that no other loss is involved in the loss of their spiritual life; too late they will find that this loss leaves the race of man *vulneratus in naturalibus,* maimed even in his natural powers. They will create a generation lower than the natural level of reason, and yet without the useful qualities of the lower level—an unbelieving, sensual, odious, dangerous generation, with power in their hands only available for destruction.

As the supernatural life is the necessary completion of the natural, it follows that the life of mere reason is incapable of its work in the world. It is the only thing in creation which is thus incapable. The sensitive life of the animals, though devoid of the faculty of reason belonging to the higher sphere, is still complete in itself and adequate for its purposes. If man had been intended by God to live only the intellectual life, a natural life of work in this world, he would have found his natural endowments sufficient for all his

requirements; there would have been no deficiency in his being, no failure in his actions. But God has given him a higher life and principles, which have their function and proper exercise in this world, and not only as reserved for the next world; and when these are neglected, the work of man's life must suffer. There will still be progress in the world, especially of the material and lower kind; there will be great and noble efforts made, and they can not be altogether unsuccessful. Real good will still be done, but it will be, at best, only partial and attended with the gravest difficulties, and to some extent it will be delusive, for oftentimes evils spring up in company with good and nullify it. How often do we see that progress is made only by a series of mistakes! How much evil has been done by legislation, devised with the best intentions, but having unforeseen, indirect effects which have done incalculable injury. A well-meaning law, based on some mistaken principle of political economy, may work the ruin of a nation. Human society would be in imminent danger of destruction at the hands of rulers and lawgivers were it not for the wonderful recuperative power which God has given it.

Knowing that the supernatural is the most important element of human life, we have the key to many problems of the present day, the secret of so many failures, the source of so many impending dangers. This is an age when the natural powers of man have been developed to a degree never reached before; a new youthfulness and vigor have budded forth; never has there been such progress, never such energy, never such promise, never such expectation; but at the same time, never such drawbacks or such forebodings. Something is deficient everywhere. There is deep learning, but it does not bring certainty to the mind or peace to the heart. There is refinement in manners, but decreasing purity of morals. Luxury abounds, but happiness is on the wane. There is an enormous growth of wealth, but so badly is it distributed that misery grows even more rapidly. While cities grow in splendor and pride, thousands of their dwellers are gradually falling below the level of decent savages. Melancholy, despondency, weariness of life, increase step by step with mental acuteness and brilliancy of wit. So far are things disjointed, that some high-minded, though erratic, enthusiasts have thought that the only hope for the future of society lies in the total destruction of the present system, to rebuild again from the foundations. But a remedy so desperate is not re-

quired. It would suffice to bring back that element which men have rejected as not belonging to their lives, the principles of supernatural faith. This is "the stone which the builders rejected," and which is "made the head of the corner" (I Pet. ii, 7). It is the want of this which nullifies so much of human effort; for "unless the Lord build the house, they labor in vain that build it. Unless the Lord keep the city, he watcheth in vain that keepeth it" (Ps. cxxvi, 1).

There were days, not so long ago, when physical strength and brute force were the object of men's admiration and the ruling power among them, and when education and mental power were despised as foolish, puny, and unmanly. The day has come for the tables to be turned. Brute force is the slave of mind. The power which rules the world dwells now in the brain and not in the muscles and sinews. Let us hope that the course of progress will bring about the dominance of the spiritual life over the intellectual. Let us look forward to a day when men will wonder at the former backward state in which intellect thrust faith aside, as now they marvel at the days when force dominated over intelligence. Whether this truth will ever prevail universally we can not judge; but we know that it is the duty of each man in his own life, as he has built the life of reason on the life of sense, so to build the life of the spirit on the life of faith. It is our first duty to cultivate the supernatural life by dwelling on the ideas of faith, by practising the higher law which Jesus Christ has given us, by imitating His life, and entering by conformity of intellect and will into union with Him.

## LI. DYING TO THE WORLD AND LIVING TO CHRIST

BY THE RIGHT REV. BISHOP JAMES BELLORD, D.D.

"Mind the things that are above, not the things that are upon the earth. For you are dead, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. . . . Mortify, therefore, your members which are upon the earth."—Coloss. iii, 2, 3, 5.

*SYNOPSIS.—I. The meaning of the text. The necessity of obeying its mandate. The meaning of Life and Death.*

*II. The existence of the two worlds—their absolute opposition—each strives for the mastery of the soul. Scripture gives the fundamental principles of each and teaches the Christian his duty. We cannot serve both God and world. We must choose between them.*

*III. This duty of dying to ourselves is made difficult to our circumstances in life; we are in the midst of the world, exposed to the danger of contamination: The crowd rushes headlong in one direction—un-Christian ideas predominate in the business world. In spite of all God must be served. We may learn a lesson from the zeal of the worldlings.*

*IV. Practical hints: (1) Death to sin; (2) mortification of body; (3) fidelity to religious duties; (4) attachment to our faith. Hatred of heresy; (5) indifference or lack of attachment to things of the world; (6) recollection of the presence of God, frequent ejaculations.*

I. To die to the world and to live to Christ is a duty which is forcibly laid down for us in the Sacred Scriptures. We are reminded to inflict death on the old man of sin that is within us by means of mortification of the body, and are called upon to copy in our lives the death and the subsequent resurrection of our divine Master. Let us ask what there is in the idea of death that we have to reproduce in our relations with the world.

The human body, as soon as the soul has left it, suffers a loss which changes all its relations to external things. That body, an hour before, was the dwelling-place of an intelligence, of mastery, of powers, of sympathies; it is now no more than a piece of earth with no rights, no wishes, no consciousness. It is separated suddenly from all its surroundings; it has no longer any communication with the world in which it lived. That body looks, indeed, for a while much the same as what it was. But it is completely changed. It has no use for these things which it depended on, food, and clothing, and warmth. These things which were its own possessions no more belong to it; it has no property, it can not possess, it can not

dispose of things. It is no longer able to enjoy companionship, it can not enter into the joys and pains of other men, it is unconscious of the love and the sorrows of family or friends. It remains a day or two longer in the midst of relatives, and home, and belongings, but it has no longer any part or interest in them.

At other times, when there has been no loss of life, but only loss of communication or of sympathies, the same word "death" is used. A paralyzed limb, which can not be used for its proper purposes and can not suffer, is said to be dead. If the infirmities of old age, with blindness, deafness, etc., separate a man from intercourse with others, he is said to be dead to the external world. Insanity is death, legally speaking; a mad man has lost his legal powers of making contracts and devising property. So, too, one who is never moved by love, gratitude, shame, generosity, is called dead to the ordinary feelings of human nature.

On the other hand, we speak of this or that "life," or of this or that "world," inside the circle of the great life of mankind. Any large number of persons who have some absorbing pursuit in which the rest of men take little interest is called a "life" or a "world." Thus we have the artistic world, commercial life, political life, the world of science or politics, military life, sporting life, the world of good society and so on. Each of these is complete in itself and separate, more or less, from other circles of men. The members of each frequent principally one another's company, they have common interests and occupations which fill their whole thoughts, and have their own conversation, and phrases, and slang, which other men would neither enjoy nor understand. They have their own views of things, sometimes their own manners and customs; they take little interest in other pursuits, and often look with contempt on all who are outside their own circle.

II. We may apply all this to the two worlds that are under our present consideration, and see how we should live to one and die to the other. There are, among living men, two worlds intertwined and mixed up one with the other at every point, yet perfectly distinct—those who live the natural, and those who live the supernatural life. These are in daily communion with each other; there are often no external signs to distinguish them, but their inward principles are absolutely hostile and inconsistent, each with each. They tend in opposite directions, one upward to God, the other downward to self, and material things, and at last to hell.

The spirit of Christ and the spirit of the world are so opposed that each is "death" as regards the other. Their aims are different: one pointing to a future life as the supreme object to which all else must be subordinate, while the other denies that there is any reality beyond this life. To the one, all this present existence with works and duties belonging to the family or the state, with pleasures and possessions, is but a means or instrument for some further end; and at the same time it may be an impediment and a danger. These things, then, require to be pursued with caution, without exclusive attachment, and with much restraint. The carnal spirit considers temporal things as the sole object of existence; and all other considerations such as moral or spiritual laws must be subordinated to that great object. The spirit of Christ says that self-sacrifice for the sake of God and man is necessary to the perfect life and future happiness. The spirit of the world says, "Seek first your own good; let all interests be sacrificed to your own." The world says, "Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die." Christ says, "Mortify, therefore, your members which are upon the earth." The qualities which the world admires, practises and inculcates upon the rising generations are pride, covetousness, lust, anger, gluttony, envy and sloth. The qualities most cordially detested are the great virtues of the Gospel, humility, liberality, chastity, meekness, temperance, brotherly love, diligence.

Let us take a few of the many passages of the New Testament that treat of the opposition between the doctrine of Christ and the doctrine of the world, and of the strict necessity that Christians are under of dying to the spirit of the world. First, there is a whole class of passages which we may say are summed up in the Beatitudes, and which prescribe virtues that the world always despises. The blessed ones, according to our divine Lord, are the poor in spirit, the meek, the clean of heart, the mourners, the peaceful, those who are persecuted. Then, we are told not to love the ways of men, nor seek to please them, if we would be on the side of God. "Love not the world nor the things which are in the world. If any man love the world the charity of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world is the concupiscence of the flesh, and the concupiscence of the eyes, and the pride of life" (I John ii, 15, 16). And St. Paul: "If I pleased men I should not be the servant of Christ" (Gal. i, 10). Another Apostle uses almost the same expressions: "Know you not that the friendship of this world is the

enemy of God? Whosoever, therefore, will be a friend of this world becometh an enemy of God" (Jas. iv, 4). Hence, it is that Our Lord prepares His followers for the enmity of men of the world: "If the world hate you, know ye that it hath hated me before you. If you had been of the world, the world would love its own; but because you are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you" (John xv, 18, 19). And elsewhere He tells us that we can not make a compromise between the two spirits: "No servant can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will hold to the one and despise the other. You can not serve God and Mammon" (Luke xvi, 13). We find another class of passages, mostly in the Epistles, which speak of the spirit of Christ as life, and bid us die to the world and its spirit. Thus: "The wisdom of the flesh is death, but the wisdom of the spirit in life and peace. Because the wisdom of the flesh is an enemy to God; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither can be. . . . If you live according to the flesh you shall die. But if by the spirit you mortify the deeds of the flesh you shall live" (Rom. viii, 6, 7, 13). This corresponds with our text: "You are dead and your life is hidden with Christ in God. . . . Mortify, therefore, your members which are upon the earth" (Coloss. iii, 3, 5).

It is clear, then, that there are two living, active spirits or sets of principles among mankind, each of which is destructive of the other. They do not go on, each in its own groove, working its way independently, but in every land, in every age, in every man's own soul, the two spirits are struggling together for supremacy; and that conflict will never be decided before the day of the general judgment. It is equally clear that every one of us is decisively subject to one or other of these two; we can not belong to both at once; if we attempt to reconcile them it is equivalent to renouncing the spirit of Christ. Our God is a jealous God and will admit no rival or partner in His dominion over us; He requires our whole heart, and soul, and strength. We are bound, then, to be as dead men toward the spirit of the world, if we would have in us that spirit of Christ which is necessary for our salvation.

III. The circumstances in which God has placed us make this a matter of great difficulty. We have to live secluded from the spirit of the world while we are in the midst of the world, we must be, in a manner, in solitude while surrounded by a crowd. There is, indeed,

a state of life in this world which is truly called retiring from the world and dying to the world. It is the monastic or religious life. Some are called to renounce all possession, all business, all family ties even, and to live a common life with others, engaged in prayer and self-denial, cultivating the highest virtues, and occupied with works of religion and benevolence. Such are removed from the ordinary temptations of life, from its cares, its littleness, its annoyances, its corruption; their work, their associations, the atmosphere in which they live, tend to raise the soul to God and develop a likeness to Jesus Christ. But few are invited by God to this lofty state of death to the world.

There have been times and places when the Christian spirit prevailed in whole communities or even countries. The practise of religion was general, there were no divisions in belief, sin was disreputable, the divine law was paramount, public opinion and universal custom were on the side of piety and virtue. One of the three great enemies of salvation, the world, *i. e.*, the world of wickedness, was almost non-existent. The tendency of ordinary men to go with the crowd, was a tendency that told for goodness. The ordinary state of men was a state of death to worldliness.

Our times are very different. It is not so easy for us to serve God. We live in days of conflict. We need a degree of watchfulness, and of stamina, a power of resistance and determination, beyond what men required in more peaceful days. Most of God's servants must live and toil in the midst of the world of sense, they have to earn their living and establish their families. Their condition and duties compel them to labor for temporal retribution, to seek for the meat which perisheth, and to lay up some portion at least of these treasures, which rust and moth consume. Their external lives must, in great measure, resemble the lives of those who belong not to Christ but to this world. Most of their time, and exertions, and thoughts, must be devoted to things that are not spiritual. They must struggle, and plan, and make the most of opportunities lest, in the heat of competition, they be left destitute, or thrust out of their proper place in life. Here is the great difficulty. The moderate use of things is much harder than abstaining entirely from using them. Few can strike the exact medium of giving to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, and to God the things that are God's; of striving energetically for temporal things and keeping the heart detached from them; of carrying out to the full

one's worldly duties, and yet neglecting nothing of the spiritual ones; of doing thoroughly all that the hand findeth to do, yet without falling into any extreme. An accurate knowledge of our duties to God and ourselves, with great conscientiousness, can alone help us to walk safely between the difficulties that hem us in on the right hand and the left. We require a prudence infused by God that we may observe the delicate lessons of the Apostle: "It remaineth that they who have wives be as if they had none; and they that weep as though they wept not; and they that rejoice, as if they rejoiced not; and they that buy as though they possessed not; and they that use this world as if they used it not" (I Cor. vii, 29, 31).

He who would serve God in the spirit is exposed further to the danger of contamination by intercourse with the world. He is in constant and the closest communication with men whose every principle differs from his own; he is united with them by the bonds of business, friendship, relationship. He is in a world where false and immoral principles are predominant, and where his own are unpopular and almost powerless. All the business of life is conducted on an unchristian basis. The spirit of the world makes itself felt at every moment, it enters into every action, it is a kind of atmosphere, an all-pervading poisonous atmosphere, to breathe which is death. It is very difficult to resist a universal influence such as this, to withstand ideas that prevail with almost all mankind, to keep ourselves, in short, "unspotted from this world" (Jas. i, 27) while in this world. The position is a very difficult one. The spirit of Christ and the spirit of the world continually come into open conflict, and it becomes necessary to sacrifice one or the other. Very many yield to the corruption of evil influences and fall away. Interest prevails over faith. They fear the enmity of men more than they love the friendship of God. The advantages of the world are present and visible, and very enticing; and for these they are willing to sacrifice the happiness and encounter woes, which, although infinite and eternal, belong to an invisible, a future, and perhaps a distant life.

In spite of difficulty, in spite of the strongest allurements, we must give a rigid obedience to the law and Christ. We must be as dead men toward the worldly spirit, hating it, holding aloof from it, unfamiliar with it, neither entering into its ideas nor understanding its speech. It ought to be at once evident that we belong to a different sphere, and that the ways of sin and worldliness are

not as our ways. In our bearing toward the ungodly world we may take a lesson from the world itself; for here, too, it is wiser in its generation than the children of the light. What is the attitude of irreligious, sensual, proud, sordid men toward the spirit of Christ? Is it not one of most uncompromising hostility? Do they ever allow themselves to be led by any spiritual motive? Do they not hate every manifestation of Christ in religion or in virtuous life? They are, indeed, dead to faith, humility, devotion, to all considerations of the soul, the divine law, the future life. They will have nothing to do with such things. Tell them they are ignorant, and that further knowledge would dissipate prejudice. They admit it; but they prefer not to know, lest their hatred should be diminished. So confirmed are they in their chosen course that the spirit of God is powerless against their perverted wills, and no ray of supernatural light is able to overcome their blindness. Such should be our opposition to the spirit of the world, excepting always the excesses of unreason and uncharitableness; such our frame of mind toward all that is opposed to religion, and high virtuous principle, and the spirit of Jesus Christ.

IV. We have to see now how we can reduce to practise for the guidance of our daily lives this broad command of dying to the world and living to Christ.

1. Our dying, as the Epistles explain, is to sin. "We being dead to sins should live to justice" (I Pet. ii, 24). "You are dead indeed, to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus Our Lord" (Rom. vi, 11). He who keeps himself clean from all mortal sin is dead to a very great deal of the spirit of the world. He differs already very widely from those whose only idea is to obey every selfish impulse that rises within them. He is possessed of the grace and presence of God; he must have practised prayer and watchfulness, and fought many victorious battles. This is the beginning of the perfect life.

2. A further dying is accomplished by bodily mortification. This is associated in our text with living to Christ. "You are dead, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. . . . Mortify, therefore, your members which are upon the earth" (Coloss. iii, 3, 5). The restraint of fasting and other acts of self-denial deaden the irregular impulses of the lower nature, check its readiness to yield under temptation, and facilitate recollection in prayer and union with God. We must accustom ourselves to the privation of lawful indulgences, so as to break down our natural unruliness; without such practise

we shall not have sufficient command over our wild passions in the critical moment of temptation, and we shall be carried away to the death of mortal sin.

3. Our living to Christ may be summed up as the careful observance of our religious duties. We then believe firmly the truths of faith and keep them constantly before us as our guide. Especially we remember that God's law is superior to all human law and all personal convenience, and that the salvation of our soul is the first object of life. We observe the duty of prayer, of sanctifying the Sunday, of frequently approaching the Sacraments, of observing the fasts of the Church. We keep the image of Jesus Christ before our eyes, we study His virtues in the lives of the Blessed Virgin and the saints, and endeavor to model our life accordingly. In fact, the simple observances of an ordinary good Catholic constitute, sufficiently for salvation, a life in Christ.

4. One particular thing in which the living spirit of Christ is especially manifested is attachment to the faith, hatred of all error and heresy, and zeal for the propagation of the truth. Some are very lukewarm in this matter. They are inclined to keep their faith in the background, as if they were somewhat ashamed of it. Or else they hold to it simply because they happened to be born in it; and heresy they treat as if it were only a form of belief in which other men happen to have been born. Many members of the Church think so little of their faith that they will not take the trouble to teach their children their prayers or send them where they will learn their religion. Such have not the spirit of Christ. St. Paul says: "If any man have not care of his own, and especially of those of his house, he hath denied the faith and is worse than an infidel" (I Tim. v, 8).

5. The spirit of the world manifests itself in excessive striving after earthly goods and possessions. The saints of God have shown perfect indifference to such things and have preferred to surrender them. Those who lead the ordinary life are not called to this detachment, nor would it be consistent with their duties. But still, while they seek for and possess these things, they must abstain from setting their hearts upon them. They must not devote too exclusive an attention to them, nor allow them to interfere with the affairs of their salvation; they must not indulge in any great love or anxiety about earthly possessions, and must be content to suffer the loss of them with patience and resignation to God's will. They must look

upon wealth and position as a loan from God, as belonging to Him, and entrusted to them, as to stewards, to be employed for God's service. They must bear with an equal mind prosperity or adversity, and be ready to suffer loss, or affliction, or death, when God shall please. This is being dead to the world; this is living to Christ; this is what all men should aim at.

6. Another notable effect of life in Christ is when we cultivate the remembrance of God's presence, thinking of Him continually during the day, raising our hearts to Him by ejaculations of love at frequent intervals; so as to be able to say with Ezechias: "I beseech thee, O Lord, remember how I have walked before thee in truth and with a perfect heart, and have done that which is good in thy sight" (Isa. xxxviii, 3).

To acquire this spirit and carry it out in all our actions should be the great object of our endeavors. This will gain for us the presence of God, His favor, and visible protection; this will gain for us peace and happiness. Let us not be deterred by the miserable fear that we shall suffer in worldly estimation or prosperity by acting in an unworldly spirit. We may, indeed, lose some temporal profit, or find ourselves despised and set aside for practising what the world considers folly. Such folly would, indeed, be most profitable to men in general if they adopted it but it may bring disadvantage to the few who carry it out in opposition to the bulk of men with whom they have dealings. Even so, it will not bring so much disadvantage as we may apprehend. The favor of God does more for our best interests than our own worldly wisdom; and the greatest success in life will not confer upon us the happiness which God gives to those who trust in Him. It is worth our while to incur any temporal disadvantage for the sake of the blessing which God pronounces on His faithful servants: "Blessed are all they that fear the Lord, that walk in his ways. For thou shalt eat the labors of thy hands; blessed art thou and it shall be well with thee. . . . Behold thus shall the man be blessed that feareth the Lord. May the Lord bless thee out of Sion; and mayest thou see the good things of Jerusalem all the days of thy life" (Ps. cxxvii).

252
N917

3953

NUMEROUS

AUTHOR

Pulpit Commentary on Catholic

TITLE Teaching. Vol. III

| DATE LOANED | BORROWER'S NAME | ROOM NUMBER |
| --- | --- | --- |
| | FEB 9 | |
| | APR 4 | |

3953